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APRIL 1911

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Author of "Routledge Rides Alone"

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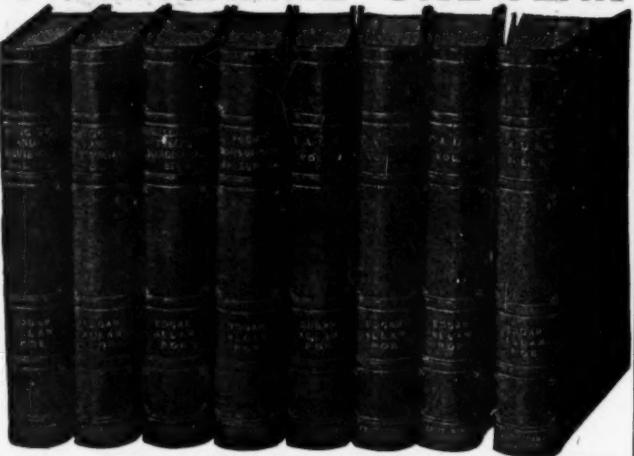
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LIPPINCOTT'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE

APRIL, 1911



THE RISING ROAD

BY

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

Author of "Routledge Rides Alone," "The Glowworm," etc.

I.

AT Oporto, a delightful but little known watering-place in northern Spain, I first met Eulalie Roma. Her mother, an Englishwoman, is an ineffable memory to me. Every one understands the soul-deep impressions sometimes engraven within a boy. Two weeks of summer days at Oporto, the maid, Eulalie, and her mother,—I can shut my eyes, when all is still, and drift back. . . . My father was wandering with me around the world, but never finding sunlight. I know now, though I could not understand then, that he was a man of terrible but silent sorrow. I need hardly say that it was the loss of my mother years before. I never knew her. Enough for that. . . .

The maiden, Eulalie, was a tempest, a poem, a sunrise—a cumulative inspiration to me, as the Grecian Urn must have been to the incomparable Keats. I was sixteen, but the impressions of lost ages stirred within me at the turn of the girl's hand. I would n't tell this sort of thing if the narrative did n't bear out the strange and enduring attraction she held for me. Then, there is a spring or two of responsive temperament in everybody. . . . I seemed to have known the arch of Eulalie's temple, the arc of her eyelash, the imprint of her finger—before Atlantis was lost. That slender flying figure of a girl with Anglo-Saxon character and the ancient glory of Spain in her dark merciful eyes! She seemed at once the goal of all my heredity

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—an attainment worthy of the dearest efforts of this and coming lives. I do not intend to go on in this peculiar strain, but I seem to remember keenly to-night.

My young days were rare—a boy with a man around and around the world. My father was the wisest and kindest of men. Sometimes the thought takes possession—that a heart must be broken to let out its sweetness. I grew up decently white and unsullied on the borderland of flesh and dreams. The latter, of course, are clouded and coarsened now. “The prison-house closes on the growing boy.” Even so, there come to me from time to time, even yet, swift memories of long-ago transactions which, when I suddenly stop to think, never actually occurred to me in this life.

But those few summer days at Oporto! Eulalie and I were many times together—just a boy and girl—in the surf, sailing when the ocean was still enough, strolling on the beaches and cliffs, or reading on the verandas of that quaint but charmful old Hotel Muriel. I was too furious with adoration to be completely happy. This maid of thirteen submerged me in enchantments, and all with the abandonment of a child who does not know nor care. Once when we were walking along the cliffs together, Eulalie called my attention to a number of men and boys shouting and swimming below. They were diving into the combers, playing water-polo and having much sport. I had scarcely noted them, nor heard their voices, until she pointed with these words:

“Why don’t you play with them, Lancey Ives, and not always with me—a girl?”

Her question was pure poison, as you may understand. That she could believe me but part of a man, aroused an instant and monstrous rebellion. In an inspirational flash, a lasting remedy appeared to my mind. Said I:

“I have ‘played’ with you because I preferred. There are young men to play with everywhere. Come, I will show you something.”

She followed eagerly, possibly surprised at the changed expression of my face. A little to the east of the Hotel Muriel the cliffs, for a little space, abut directly to the sea—no beach at all. According to the tide, there is from five to ten feet of water at the base of the cliffs, which rise at this point to a height of between forty and fifty feet. We stood together at the edge of a rather lofty point, after a few minutes’ hurried walk. I whipped off my coat and collar. She laughed nervously.

“If you think I am a coward, Eulalie,” I said angrily, “I’ll show you something that those men and boys in the surf *dare* not do!” I laugh to think of it now.

I pointed to the circling gulls, so she would not seize me, and dived—her scream in my ears. I had never dived one-half the distance before, though I loved the art, and knew enough to aim far out. Luck or love, whatever it was, helped me to keep my point, and I “ruddered” with my hands at the impact, since the depth was so slight. I caught the water, too, at a very good angle, and fought the surf around the cliffs to a rock. For a moment her face, white and horrified, strained down from far above. My father liberated me a half-hour later with a boat. His talk with me on the subject of my foolhardiness is not pertinent.

It was all utterly foolish. The episode is cited merely to show the intensity of my feelings in her presence—even when we were children, as you might say. . . . Eulalie was walking with her mother on the hotel veranda that evening. I approached them, not without trepidation, for I knew something of the maid’s way.

“Don’t come near me, Lancey Ives. I hate you!” she cried, and I saw an imperial rage in her wide wondrous eyes, reflecting the light of the dinner-room.

“Hush, Eulalie! It is wicked for you to speak so,” her mother said quickly. . . . “Lancey, come here, dear.” I obeyed. She put her arms about me and said quietly: “You did a very cruel and reckless thing, boy. Think of what a tragedy it would have been to me—to your father—if you had killed yourself. I’m sure you see now that it would have been braver of you simply to answer her question and let that suffice. Don’t you know that girls are such queer things, and are always asking boys foolish questions? She just wanted to know what you would say. Girls always want to know what boys will say. We’ll forget all about it now, but don’t let her drive you into danger again.”

I remember wishing that this sweet woman were my mother. Eulalie was ordered to shake hands, and slapped my palm with her light slim fingers and pouted at me. . . . The night before the Romas were due to leave Oporto, I was sitting alone on the veranda, almost at the same place. It had struck ten, and I was altogether devoured with tragedy. There was a patter of feet behind me, light as a puppy’s scampering, a touch of lips upon my cheek, and she was gone. That was the end of my first episode, and my last glimpse was that of a tall, thin, agile-limbed creature with flying black hair, disappearing into the doorway. Such was Eulalie’s impulsive idea of reparation for her crossness of the previous night.

My father died when I was twenty. I was dangerously rich, good at several things, excellent in none, of fitful energy and no particular ambition save to do something new. Alone, I left travelled lines, but

continued the restless stir from place to place. All Asia fascinated me, and my wanderings in India, China, and Tibet covered years. I was twenty-five, in fact, when it occurred to me to sit down in Hong Kong and study the passing show and meditate on the big continent behind. Hong Kong is a house of all nations. I brooded lazily on the idea of doing a book of sketches, cosmopolitan portraits, but apparently I was spoiled in the making with much money. I have found it far more interesting to listen to men, study their ways and sayings, their garments, hands, and foreheads—than to sit down and write what I have heard and thought. I have sat alone in cafés whole evenings, drinking the lightest Rhenish wine with seltzer, listening to the play of brilliance and vulgarity, and vowing to reproduce the types of men and women, but somehow I lack the sense of delight in attainment which makes prolonged effort possible. So my book is still but a trunkful of unconnectable scraps, like Teufelsdrockh's note-bags.

Only of Eulalie Roma, I could always write and dream. I lived day and night with the memory of that little maiden of Oporto. Evening and morning I saw those great eyes of hers, straining over the cliff at me; walked, swam, sailed, talked, with her; heard again and again her mother's sweet admonishings; felt Eulalie's scorn, and her kiss upon my cheek; remembered every movement of the slender, animate, dynamic girl whose Spanish eyes swung between me and heaven. There has never been another woman in my life. I have not been ambitionless toward this attainment. Indeed, it may be that the desire of her consumed all other ambitions.

In Hong Kong a second time I saw her—with ten years added to her thirteen. It was on one of those higher terraced roads of the city—I forget the name—a white road, on a burning but humid day—villas, arbors, gardens, to the next terrace on one side, and the foliaged declivity to another below. A creamy silken parasol, approaching, first caught my notice. The face was covered. I could not possibly have known the figure after the changing decade, yet I was whipped that instant as by the effect of some powerful narcotic.

Though old, old, in the world's ways, I was new as Adam in the presence of her. When our eyes met, I saw a mingling of dismay and joy, and gasped at the wondrous change in her. She was still frail, not so tall as I had expected; but something of the fineness and fragrance of young fruit-blooms was identified with her presence in my mind. Then the ignition of that ancient mysterious attraction again; all the elements of my body and brain seemed to stretch out and breathe, each need finding vitality in volumes. Her first fearless but intent look; the dawning recognition; the smile, and then her voice—my mind seized and held them all! I see her shaded face and her hand outstretched in the splendid light. . . .

Back of all her words and mannerisms of the next hour, I sensed a strange reticence. It was as if her mind were divided between misgivings and countering pleasures. I did not know then that she was afraid of her father in my presence; nor did I know that her life had been conserved from men and the world, almost as a convent maid's. I think, even, that she remembered a trifle nervously how she had startled me that last night on the veranda of the Hotel Muriel. None of these thoughts came to me then. I was tranched with the replenishing of the old love; incapable of reflection, clumsy-headed as a boy.

Possibly the tension was a little eased after an hour's walk with Eulalie on the terraced roads, but I became depressed by an inexplicable foreboding that our time together was destined to be brief. It may have been that I reflected psychically her dread of her father's seeing us together. I do not profess to understand. My commanding desire was to be with her in a place unknown to distractions and limited leisure. At all events, the interview was marked by strange tension, until the last two or three minutes, in which I lapsed into inanity. We had halted by a railing at the edge of the road. The descent to the next terrace reminded her of the cliffs at Oporto.

"Please don't dive over now, will you—to show how unafraid you are?" she asked shyly; then, before I had formed a reply, added: "What have you been doing all these years, Lancey Ives—some big world's work?"

It was her long-ago way of addressing me: "Do this, Lancey Ives! . . . Stay here, Lancey Ives!" It spurred me.

"No, Eulalie," I replied; "I have been wandering about, studying men and waiting for this day."

She turned to me swiftly, hungrily, the wonderful eyes intent for an answer before she put the question: "What do you mean by—waiting for to-day?"

It was a heart challenge. My whole life since would have been changed had I only known it then. Poor callow adorer! I feared that my boldness had startled her, and turned the point to lightness, when I should have told of my love and constant searching. What I said was inconceivably dull.

"Do you remember, Eulalie, what your mother once told me—that girls always ask questions to find out what boys will say?"

As I look at it in writing, the words have a careless, even a caddish, look. She had been brave enough to delve for the truth. . . . The time proved so short. There was silence a moment. Then she started to descend to her hotel. Following, I was not slow to realize the life-or-death opportunity I had missed. Swiftly she walked down the winding road, preserving a distance between us. Once I tried to explain, but she broke in:

"Is n't it terrible that you have lost your father, and I—have lost my mother? . . . I used to wish my father were like yours."

Silence again. Even in the pain of the time, my eyes filled with the royalty of the woman hurrying before me. Only Spain can underlay that august lily pallor in the cheeks of her women. Those Spanish eyes, I can only again suggest. The brooding of years has not brought me words. A lithe young woman, girlishly-figured, swift and unerring of movement; and the face, so perfect to me, accentuating in every lovely line the sumptuous volumes of temperament of which her eyes burned intimations. To think that this vision of my life's desire should be hurt and disappointed through an ill-timed triviality!

We reached the hotel and paused upon the veranda facing the harbor. Eulalie was distraught, and diverted my advances with aimless nothings concerning the city and the ship-crowded distance. Suddenly she seized my arm and pointed to a man alighting from a launch on the water-front.

"You must leave me now!" she commanded in a low voice. "It is my father. You cannot understand, but he is strange. I would have to *suffer needlessly*—if he saw you with me. I hoped he might have gone up to Canton. . . . Go, Lancey Ives—go at once! . . . I'm afraid while I have been dreaming these ten years—you have just trifled around the world. . . . But I cannot forget you, Lancey Ives. . . . *Adios!*"

Her intensity made me obey. . . . That night in the billiard-room of the hotel, I saw closely for the first time the Spaniard who had alighted from the launch—Eulalie's father. He must have seen me leave her on the veranda in the afternoon, for he approached and scrutinized me from head to foot with overbearing audacity. He was a heavy, florid man of forty-five, with a cruel but flashing eye. Face to face for a second, we held each other's gaze. That look was of the nature of a challenge.

II.

Not having been presented to Serafin Roma, I turned away presently, and a moment later he left the room. In that sleepless night, I made a hundred plans—even wrote a long letter to Eulalie, to be used in case I should have trouble meeting her. . . . Her fear haunted me; indeed, it was not without a hint of her personal wretchedness, seductive with mystery as it was. The fact that she had expressed a wish that her father had been like mine, and that she had told me that my being with her would cause her to "*suffer needlessly*," gave me a poignant, if formless, conception of her misery. I was abroad early and encountered one of the bitterest surprises of my life.

The Romas had sailed for Shanghai in the night. I could not

engage passage until two days afterward. The father and daughter had left the big river-town when I got there. So it was all the way up the coast and in the Japanese ports. Always they were a ship ahead of me—even for the long Pacific voyage to America. In San Francisco, I lost track of them entirely. It is far easier to keep a line on foreign travellers in Asia, than upon Europeans in the States. Drifting to New York, I remained for several months; and though a man in New York is about as close to the heart of things as he can approach in this world, my quest was in no way forwarded there.

Finally, in Spain, I looked up the record of Serafin Roma, and found him to have been a very greedy man, but a brilliant manipulator of high affairs. The Romas of Madrid are a noble family, but morally decadent, it appeared; at least, the male line. The father of Eulalie formerly had been a very important personage in court circles of the Spanish capital. He had overreached, however, in chicanery and intrigue, and had been banished, to all intents—at least, stripped of honors and sent to an insular post in the Philippines. American control of the Archipelago had just become a fact at the time of these inquiries of mine in Madrid. A Spanish officer suggested that Señor Roma had possibly allied himself with the Filipinos against the invasion of the Americans. Little as all this amounted to, it was sufficient to take me to Manila.

Any one may imagine how I was brooding behind the scenes during these months of futile search. It is a peculiarity of my family to turn gray at an early age, but I broke all records. In the interval between leaving Hong Kong after the swift-travelling Romas, and arriving, via Suez, at Manila, my hair had changed from black to pure white. Only eighteen months had been required for this vain circuit of the world, and I was now, as the Archipelago events begin, twenty-eight years old. If mental aggravations or heart-hunger had anything to do with the change in my appearance, the specific distemper was caused by my not having been equal to the occasion on that afternoon with Eulalie, as we walked together on the terraces at Hong Kong. It would n't have been so rough save that I had left her at a time when she was disappointed in me. Eulalie, as I saw it now, had been unable to forget the boy who dived from the cliffs at Oporto. It may have been that men and life disappointed her, and she had tucked away one little memory to hitch her optimism to. And then when she, knowing the moments were few, had brought the issue to a direct bearing-point—with who can tell what effort of will?—that I should prove trivial, evasive—a talker instead of a doer! This was the carking memory.

Manila was a place of extraordinary activity when I reached there. American troops were pouring in, and fighting was blithe and incessant

around the capital. One of the heroes of the day proved an old friend, Captain Mark Standart, of a regular infantry outfit. Skirmishes multiplied about him and his troops. His name came to stand for conspicuous and lucky valor, from Zapote Bridge to the full-formed and final expeditions which finished all but guerilla-fighting. It was during the rainy season of '99 that Captain Standart was called in from the field, and we met in the capital.

Meanwhile, the long tarrying in Luzon had given me little of value in the search. Serafin Roma had been military governor of Pindoro, one of the big southern islands; had encountered more or less constant rebellions against the Spanish rule; and his troops had finally deserted in a body to the insurgents. However, through Standart I was soon to get to the pith of the whole matter. My friend, the fire-eater, had not been a fortnight in Manila when he began to chafe at the inactivity and implore for new fields. A favorite always, and famous now for his recent achievements, General Otis brevetted him to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and gave him command of an important expedition for the subjection of Pindoro. We were riding together on the Luneta one sweltering night when Standart informed me of this lifting fortune. I led him a race back to the old Oriente Hotel, in spite of the open-air entertaining of the Filipino band. In the little plaza, we found quiet, long chilled glasses, stars, bugs, perfumes, and talk.

Standart was young for a captain of regulars, a thoroughbred of face and figure. Something about his manner always charmed me, even as a boy. It may have been the same with the soldiers who followed him, though it was not easy to adjust this medium-sized, low-voiced chap to the bellowing volcano of a man who had recently made the natives climb trees and hide in river-beds around the Luzon provinces.

"They say these Pindoroans drink blood for breakfast," he remarked. "Best fighting-stuff of the Archipelago—kept the Spaniards in piping hot water for hoary centuries. Spain would get the Islands all shadowed beneath the Dove's wings—when Pindoro would fly up and sting her, starting all the rest afresh. We've got to shoot to kill down there."

"Pindoro," said I, "is where Serafin Roma was governor until recently."

"He's the man I'm to put on the gloves with," said the Captain excitedly. "What in the devil do you know about him?"

I had trembled with the hope that Roma was still there—that the Captain would know the name. "I've been looking up the history of the Islands a little, while you were out in the hot red roads of war," said I.

"And what do you know about him?" Standart asked.

"That's the question I'm expiring to put to you," said I.

"All that I know is that he had been here in the Islands a number of years, latterly in Pindoro, and that just before the Archipelago became American, Roma, or, at least, Roma's Spanish command, turned over to the natives in a body. Since then the natives, having nothing particular to fight, are no doubt raising rice, tobacco, and natives."

"All very good, but I have reason to believe that they are also preparing to receive me," the Captain resumed. "Pindoro declares Luzon, Samar, Mindanao, Panay, and the rest of the cluster may do as they —— please, but she's for independence. Pindoro stands alone. She can fight, knows it, and loves it. Moreover, she's got a leader I'm afraid of—the same Serafin Roma. That Spaniard will bear watching. You can tell how *strongly* he resisted the mutiny of his troops, when the Pindoroans made him—their erstwhile enemy—commander-in-chief of the army, practically the ruler of the island. He was keen enough to foresee the downfall of Spanish influence. As for his fighting qualities, I'm told that he's always got something up his sleeve—a strategist and a gamester. Well, you can figure how formidable General Otis holds him when he is giving me a full regiment, a mountain battery, wagon, pack, and hospital trains, and a gunboat—nice tidy little command—and there's only eighteen or twenty thousand people on the whole island. More than a third of the number are in the capital, San Cristobal, which it is our present undertaking to make American."

"Where did you get all your information?" I asked quickly.

"There's a specialist on Pindoroan affairs in the General's confidence. He's a young Spaniard, named Velasquez, who was an officer under Roma before the big desertion. Velasquez is to be turned over to me. He's a splendid young chap, and has an extraordinary story to tell."

"When are you going to let him talk again, Captain?" I asked. "I mean, when I may be present."

"That's his business just at present—to inform me on all matters pertaining to Pindoro. I'm to see him in the morning. Of course you may be present."

"I want to go with you on this campaign, too," I observed.

Standart seized my hand. "Splendid!" he exclaimed. "But you always told me you were too dainty in the saddle——"

"This is different," I declared. "The thing is inimitably attractive—with your full-equipped force, and a gritty little continent to invade and take."

I could n't bring myself to mention Eulalie even to Standart, though I deeply delighted in our friendship. Her name was too profoundly intimate. Moreover, I was afraid I could n't make him see the daughter of the wily Roma in the pure white light she stood for me. . . .

"But how can you manage to take me along?" I inquired. "I'll not be in the service in any capacity——"

"Easy," said he. "Do you know Bob Cavanagh?"

"No."

"He's from Denver—just started here the Manila *Daily News*. I'll get you correspondent credentials, and you can furnish him a news letter occasionally—if you like. There'll be no scandal for my furnishing bunk and rations for one lone civilian. There would n't be for five, so far as that's concerned, but I don't run to press-agents as a rule."

The next mid-forenoon—after a night of thrilling thoughts and burning anticipations—I joined the newly promoted Colonel and Velasquez at the headquarters of the former in San Miguel, a fashionable suburb. The young Spaniard was a joy to meet. His patrician face, wisp of a figure, perfect courtesy, and cultured Castilian made me think that Cortès might have looked like this at twenty-five. I was grateful that my Spanish understanding had not deserted me, and that I could follow easily his faultless and rapid talk.

"I came out from Spain three years ago to seek adventures," he began. "Pindoro lured, and Serafin Roma took me in. At that time he was making his bravest attempt to regain his old and brilliant standing at Madrid, but little Pindoro was far out of the ken of Spain, and his work counted but little. Roma continued to be remembered at home for his cruelty and greed, rather than for his genius as a soldier and statesman. However, his cocoanut rafts clogged the rivers, and his commerce in oil, sugar, tobacco, and the like brought him big private tributes, in spite of the fact that he had a fight on his hands with the natives every little while to keep affairs moving. While Roma is, no doubt, avaricious, I think his real ambition was to force his way back into power with the Spanish court. This, as I told you, good or ill fortune in Pindoro failed to affect. Roma saw it finally.

"I was in the field more or less, doing the man's dirty work," Velasquez confessed, "but I enjoyed the service until I lost faith in my chief. Two years ago Spain sent a commission to the Islands. In the party was a dissolute young prince, who was among those who turned up at San Cristobal. The nobleman became infatuated with Roma's daughter; and, as you no doubt perceive, her father saw in this development a way back to the shadow of the throne in Madrid. . . . Señor Ives, you look distressed——"

"Not at all, I assure you," said I hastily; "but I confess I'm intensely interested."

"The visitors were splendidly received in the palace of Roma," Velasquez continued, regarding me with new interest. "You may smile, but the word 'palace' is not carelessly used. It is a big building

built of white stone and surrounded with beautiful gardens. This and the monastery are the only bits of mediæval architecture on the island, but they are imposing. During the garden-fête, Roma's daughter, Miss Eulalie, evaded the prince, but smiled upon me, for which I encountered my first frown from her father. To my unspeakable delight and honor, the lady later allowed me to escort her to supper, a favor designed for the prince, and danced with me afterward. Then during the evening—I was quite transported—we felt rather keenly the heat of the palace, and sought the gardens for a stroll. Now, I did not miss from time to time the glances of red-eyed rage from General Roma and the prince, but I cared for nothing, so consumed was I with wonder at the honor the lady showed me."

Velasquez related this part of the story in that boyish, bashful fashion which so grips an older man.

"I had long looked at Miss Eulalie from afar, but in her presence I could only talk about buttons and the smell of orchids and the way the fireflies gathered. Even then I realized that she was using me to parry the prince, whom she seemed to abhor. I was regarded so lightly by her that she did not consider the cost to me. Certainly I did not. Miss Roma is a lady I could serve gratefully with my life."

It is easily imagined how the young Spaniard inspired me with his cleanliness and courage. Standart appeared amused at the intensity of my interest. Velasquez thus concluded his story:

"The prince and his companions went away presently, the former in a savage rage. My own part in San Cristobal ended very suddenly a day or two after the garden-fête. . . . I was called to the carpet by General Roma. He looked both ugly and ill. I remember thinking at the time that there was not enough life left in him to carry out the big schemes in his brain. He sent me on a mission across the island. I was to deliver a sealed document to a certain native, and, what was peculiar, my orders were to make the journey alone. Twice upon the road I was set upon by alleged plunderers, and lived to reach the southern coast only because I left dead behind me. Arriving in decent order at the little port after three thrilling days, I discovered that there was no such native there as addressed on the document in my possession. Nor had there been such a native. This, and the mysterious attacks and my being sent alone in the beginning, aroused my belated suspicions. I tore open the envelope and found four or five partly used blotting-pads.

"Of course it was plain to me that it was never intended I should reach the sea alive; equally plain that for the present I could not return to San Cristobal. My adventures in reaching Manila are not uninteresting, but they have no concern with Pindoro. Arriving there, I heard that the General and his force had turned over in a body to

the cause of the natives. Frankly, I believe that Roma found his cause hopeless in Madrid, since Miss Roma was not to be 'managed' into the arms of the prince; that he also perceived, among the first, the American star rising ascendant over the Islands, and deliberately betrayed his own country. This is the man you have to fight, Captain Standart, and he's a cornered devil, sick and wise and powerful."

The Colonel took from my lips, as it were, the question:

"Is the delightful Miss Roma still in Pindoro with her father?"

"I think so."

"But why should she remain with a man—even her father—who tries to use her for his own ambition?" I asked.

"I think she pities him in his exile," Velasquez replied. "I doubt if he would do more than ask her to marry the prince. Though she refused this, her sense of duty to her father would not be dulled. She would be the last to learn the real nature of her parent. She is all that is noble and beautiful."

Velasquez spoke unsteadily. I patted his shoulder with a quick, unpremeditated movement, and felt that we had become close friends.

That month of preparation was a feverish dragging time for all. I did not breathe deeply until the big transport swung past the lights of Corregidor with her little convoy darting ahead in the dark. . . . The night was soft with the south and divine with stars. I stayed long on deck alone, my brain animate with dreams of the palace in San Cristobal—and the lovely lady there.

III.

THE green gray hills of Pindoro loomed before us. Ahead were war, intrigue, and romance; a leader of baffling craft and undoubted courage, and the rarest of women with Spanish eyes; the crack of rifles presently, the ring of hoofs, and who knows what flights and ventures, thrusts, parryings, and whispers, under the tropic stars? With Eulalie Roma in the palace behind the hills, life was all I could wish it to be that day. The little gunboat nosed about for moorings commanding the port; and more leisurely the huge transport ventured in until she stirred the mud of the yellow, sharky harbor, and dropped her iron in the ooze. The dazzling afternoon pressed down draughts of withering heat.

San Cristobal, the capital, lies nine miles up-country, but its port, the water-front of which is an ugly stretch of warehouses, tin and nipa-roofed, bears the same name. The rising rocky road from the sea to the city proper is called the Espiritu Santo trail, and upon it shortly were to befall certain rousing events. The week's weary task of landing the little army, with all its provisions, arms, and baggage, was begun.

Roma had caused the port to be deserted, and, save for night-firing into the American command, offered no resistance to our occupation.

Standart did not pretend to understand this. A landing army is always at a fearful disadvantage. The only possible explanation was that, being taken somewhat by surprise, Roma felt the greater need was to reinforce the defenses of his city. Standart chose for his headquarters a big bamboo house a mile up the trail from the water-front, and established his base about it. My mule, Dottie—alas, Pindoro had called her home to die—was unloaded late in the fourth afternoon, and carried me up from the water-front to headquarters, whither pack-trains were now conveying the late cargo.

The smell of warm earth from the thick growths by the trail-side; little stars slipping into place like glistening chorus-girls upon a darkened stage; a scandalously naked new moon, lying low in the southwest, like an arc of white-hot wire in the purple twilight; and, over my right shoulder, a majestic splash of jewel-edged crimson which showed the west—these things made that brief ride truly a memory. Even now I recall with a thrill the sight of those ammunition-boxes, three cases to a pack-mule, and the sincere way my mount, Dottie, sunk her round hind-foot into the flanks of a native-pony that proposed to jostle by on a rather narrow part of the way. That kick was so swiftly and neatly done, I scarcely felt the launched death under the saddle. Even a native cigarette which a soldier trudging in front of me exhaled was perfect fragrance.

The men were tired, but seemed happy. I marvelled at the mules that had so brutally labored since dawn, as, freed from their packs, they rolled ecstatically and kicked at the stars. For masterly use of strong words and for bringing out the various flashes of certain prisms of English, those packers were a terrible attraction. Mother Nature feeds color to men of the open. Since they do not paint, play, or write, their speech is splashed with raw pigment. I saw one gaunt packer hold a quart-cup of hot coffee in one hand, roll a cigarette with the other, and, meanwhile, set a whole picket-line of mules to trembling through a Homeric curse of all nations. He could be dainty, too, as a butterfly dip. I felt hot and courageous under the spell. A three-legged pariah-dog sniffed, took a sudden obsession, and went howling heinously down the narrow lanes of men.

A big basket of oranges streaked with green and half covered with their own fresh foliage occupied the table in Standart's quarters. We found a little fine rum and mixed it with brown sugar in the orange juice and talked late.

"What I like best about you, Ives," said Standart, whom I was now learning to call Colonel, "is that you never look twice at a woman—white, olive, red, or brown—except, of course, in an artistic way."

"Perhaps he broods constantly upon the glories of one who is lost," said Velasquez, bending to the candle-flame to light a cigarette. His face struck me as a model for old Florentine masters.

Occasionally, Major Donovan, second in command, and officer of the day, entered with reports. We stared away westward toward San Cristobal. A flower-scented south wind made our cigars glow. Once we heard the scream of a knifed sentry, and occasionally a rattle of shot from the hills. The night—starry millions set in purple—was so rich, so intimate, that I felt its stimulus tingling my senses. I can't forget that night. . . . Two days afterward the big transport went rolling empty back to Manila, but the gunboat still squatted on the yellow harbor.

We were on the march three or four days later. General Roma withdrew his outposts before us, so that no particular resistance was met until we were within three miles of the town. San Cristobal was a city built upon a hill, indeed, and shone white and alluring in the light of high noon. Standart camped upon the trail, but sent Major Donovan forth with two hundred men to learn, if possible, where the real fronts of Roma were lying in wait. This Donovan was a red roarer—an elder type of the incorrigibles of civilization. He rode a Missouri mule, as tough as himself but not nearly so decent-tempered; never sent a soldier where he would not go himself; was always in the forefront where there was whiskey or action, and was at his best when playing with peril or with a child.

Donovan's column encountered a scattering fire from the jungle for a mile or more, and finally ran into a full volley enfiladed from a spur of hills before the city. The price of learning Roma's position was the loss of seven men.

At dawn the next morning, the whole American command was in motion, with Standart, Velasquez, and the little staff in the van. Donovan, on account of a wound and his active service of yesterday, was chafing as reserve-leader and guard of the wagon-trains and ambulances. . . . In ominous silence, we advanced toward the low range of hills where the volley had been encountered. Standart had about fourteen hundred men in all, and estimated that the fighting force of the Pindoroans was easily twice that. Moreover, Roma had the position, San Cristobal being, in a paltry sense, a natural fortress.

Roma was ready for us. There was a fight that day—fight enough to flood any thirst for blood. Reaching the clearing where Donovan had struck trouble yesterday, Standart scattered his infantry in ragged skirmish on either side of the trail, facing the low hills. The left wing he gave to Major Leever, third in command, and sent the line against the hill position which had belched fire upon Donovan. Leever's men

skirmished well, running a little forward, concealing themselves behind hummocks and clumps of taller grass—then presently forward again. Standart stretched out to the right, but did not advance, rather awaited the issue.

Still endured that sickening silence from Roma's position of the day before. A volley was to be the signal for a charge by Leever, but not a puff of smoke moved behind the brown curve of the hills. Standart bit his lip nervously, as the men of the left wing crawled up the more naked shoulders of the slopes—hundreds of soldiers, just gunmeat now for the covert rifles of Roma. Finally, Standart could bear it no longer, trumpeted a quick signal to Leever, who instantly yelled a "Charge!" The Americans dashed upward and swarmed into deserted intrenchments! Crimson flooded the cheeks of the commander.

"I can see Roma laughing at us," he muttered; "but, nevertheless, he lost a good chance to thin our ranks."

At this instant a great racket of firing reached us from the tail of the column, where Donovan had been left with ammunition and supply trains. The crafty Roma, foreseeing an attack upon the hills, from the American reconnaissance of the previous afternoon, had ordered the objective point of his enemy to be deserted, and executed a jungle flanking movement. I had not expected to encounter any such strategical tactics in Pindoro, in spite of what I had heard of Roma's cunning. The strain of watching the Americans under Leever climb without cover those piping hot hills, and the danger of being cut off by the flanking movement from provision, hospital, and ammunition wagons, chilled the blood of me and choked out the zest for tropical campaigning. Colonel Standart galloped back, past his trotting infantry line, and my mule deemed it her duty to follow—a hard-mouthed, unswervable brute of a lady, this Dottie, when convinced that hers was a Christian endeavor.

Donovan's reserves were flattened upon the trail and hugging the damp ditches. The Major himself had not even dismounted, but was riding up and down the white way, holding his men together in a rain of fire from the jungles. Men were down with wounds all about. The writhing limbs, the dusty, ashen faces of the strange adventurous American boys, to whom victory or defeat meant so little, and to whom life was all, left a picture in my brain which still shines red in the dark; and the sounds—moaning from the hard-hit, the battle for breath that lungs could not hold, the thud of a fallen mule, the nearing, crashing musketry, and the roars from Donovan—all these I hear again when dreams turn hideous. Standart called back reinforcements from his own force, only leaving men to keep the trail open to Leever.

The wounded were carried back to the ambulances; the dead left upon the trail. Intrepid Donovan, taking the brunt of the fire, urged

his troops into the jungle with mellow-ripe curses plucked from five continents. Here in the thick growths the Americans engaged Roma's fighters, who kept up a ragged but diminishing fire.

With Donovan thus fighting to hold his own, and Leever fearfully engaged ahead, it came to me—a sort of sickening apparition—that we were up against the thickest ruck of war. Elements of *opera bouffe* moved not my spirit.

I glanced at Standart as we rode forward again. His dark eyes were squinted against the flashing day, and sweat was running down from under his helmet, but the grim mouth and jaw of the man steadied me, as did the stimulating profanity of Donovan, now far behind. As we spread out in the open before the hill-rise, it was made clear that Leever was pluckily holding in check a force of the Defenders twice his strength. It was now—a moment after we had filed into the cleared spaces—that my admiration and terror for Roma reached its height. The old tactician unloosed a charge from the right along the slopes between Standart and Leever, who occupied the pits above. The latter was now hemmed in on both sides, and Standart restrained from joining him, unless he could crush the charge.

This my friend set about to do with a will, spreading his column out like a fan, and hurling his steel into Roma's flying wedge.

There was something startling about this movement of the Defenders. The infantry was led on the run by a gay young mounted Spanish officer who seemed bent more upon getting his men into the perilous position between the two lines of Americans, than upon inflicting any damage as he charged.

"In God's name, what does this charge mean?" Standart said in a low tone, as if talking to himself. His eyes were upon the white-shirted, barefooted three hundred or more, now rapidly intervening between Leever and his own force. . . . I did not speak for fear of distracting him, but Velasquez said in Spanish:

"God won't tell, Colonel, but you're boring into them like a bee into a posy."

It was true. The swift-moving line before us was taking punishment in quantities and gamely. The young Spaniard of the charge was the mark of many, but Krag bullets seemed to curve about him, and his valor was showy and inspiriting. The wounded flew out of his lines like sheaves from a binder. The point of his wedge had reached nearly the length of Standart's line on the left, when the meaning of it all broke upon us.

The charge-leader suddenly halted his mount, wheeled, and held his sword high. His column jerked up and dropped to the ground. With a glass (which I never have seen since that instant) I noted that the muskets of the entire intervening column were aimed at me—

converged to a point like the ribs of an open fan. Then came the string of white puffs along the whole hostile line, and the air was electric with sudden death. Miss Dottie dropped from under me with a sad, surprised "honk." I was sprawled with a crushed shoulder. The whole staff was down. I could not see Standart, but knew that he was unhorsed—at least.

Plainly now, even in the nausea of my wound, I saw the meaning of that hell-careless charge by the Defenders. It was to kill Standart—the back-bone of the invasion. The three hundred before us were energized by the thought of one wily brain—the brain of Dictator Roma of the Defenders. . . . A last look before fainting showed me the youthful leader of the charge leading a dash straight at us. Perhaps his orders were to make sure of the death of Colonel Standart, at the price, if necessary, of himself and his entire command. At all events, pausing only to reload after the volley, he shot his force into the weltering mess which had been a moment before the heart of our command.

As for me, I remember a long torturing ascent, lying limp across the saddle of a pony, and dimly realizing that the Americans had lost the fight. The lights were mostly gone from my brain, leaving it full of dark, streaky shadows. Only now and then—I do not know the time between the intervals—there would come a wave of consciousness and pain. . . . That night, I recall coming to consciousness with some words on my lips. A native sentry was smiling at me. I was a prisoner in San Cristobal, the capital, he said. Again my brain fell into shadows.

IV.

THE prison was built in the old Spanish fashion I had observed before in Cuba and Porto Rico—a rectangle of cells, surrounding a little stone-paved plaza, with a well in the centre. The cells were small and dark, paved and walled with worn blocks of stone. The big door was made of heavy hard-wood bars. . . . Here I was imprisoned in the city of Eulalie Roma. With my good arm I felt my left shoulder. The coat had been cut away, and the wound was stiffly bandaged.

Apparently, I had slept long. My thoughts now began to play faster and faster. The complicated fight of yesterday; the astonishing method with which Roma handled his troops, and the devilish cunning of the man; horrid scenes caught at first hand in the midst of dead and dying—these recurred again to the eyes of my mind, until I was wet with sweat and choking with thirst. Then the possible mortal wounding of my friend Standart—what ruin to the invasion, if this were so!—and the sense of nearness to Eulalie Roma! These great things wearied me. . . . The figments dimmed and dimmed in my brain, and the

perspiration gave way to alternate chills and fever. The icy foot of a rat touched my throat, its fur brushing my chin, and the stench of vermin for an instant was in my nostrils. The rustle of the cockroaches—like dry leaves blown across the stone floor—filled me with a passion for daylight or death.

Sleep must have relieved me at last, for I remember looking out to find full day where moonlight had been. A sentry asked if I could walk. With his help, I reached the sunlit prison-court and leaned against the rim of the well, until he brought me a bench for a seat. The little plaza was filled with native prisoners and paupers. A woman drawing water gave me some, and a cloth to cleanse my face and hand. Coffee and bread were brought presently.

In three days I had gained much strength and was able to walk about the court with little weakness. Prisoners were locked in the cells only at night, with the exception of three or four inmates who were either too ill or too dangerous to be permitted abroad. Many times I walked by the locked cells, but it was over-dark within to distinguish any occupant at a glance. On the third day, a horrid fetor emanated from one, so that I sickened and could not pass that barred door again. Often in the midst of the night I had heard low groans, as from a man slowly dying.

These sounds so wrought upon my nerves the third night that I determined to learn their source if possible the next morning, unless my investigations should lead me too near those bars behind which lay the malodorous horror. Accordingly, upon being released to the court after the long, hateful night, I peered into the first of the shut cells and was greeted presently with a volume of Spanish curses of such venom and vitality that I retired breathless and shaken as by nightmare. My second adventure was an intrusion upon the privacy of a native woman and a new-born child. One of the women in the court informed me that the young mother had recently murdered the father of her babe.

There was still another mystery to be penetrated, apart from the place of carrion. My eyes were now rather accustomed to the gloom, and I peered through the bars of the third locked cell. It was similar to mine, and the figure of a man was vaguely outlined upon the wooden shelf. The figure stirred and moaned faintly; then I was startled by a scarcely audible warning:

“Sh-h. . . . Is that you, Señor Ives?”

“Yes,” I said excitedly. The voice was faint and altered, yet there was something about it that moved my memories.

“It is I—Velasquez.”

“And you are wounded?” I whispered.

“Yes; badly. Turn your face away from the bars, and listen.”

"But won't they let you lie out in the air?"

"No. Listen! Roma hates me. He tried to kill me before, you remember—because of the kindness of Miss Roma. . . . I think I have been recognized—and that is why the cell is locked. There is little chance for my life," Velasquez went on hurriedly, as if afraid his strength would not last. "I feared for a volley upon Colonel Standart and the staff, when Roma drove his line between us and Major Leever—"

"Tell me, Velasquez—Colonel Standart was not killed or captured?"

"He was not captured. His horse fell under him, but I could not see if he were wounded. His men formed about him and repelled the charge. I pray that the Colonel is not dead. . . . If you ever see him again, Señor Ives, I want you to carry to Colonel Standart my compliments and my heart's best loyalty. Of the ultimate American victory I have no doubt. . . . And, Señor Ives"—his voice was shaky and hardly audible—"if it ever should be your great privilege to meet Miss Eulalie Roma, I should be thankful—if you reminded her of Velasquez who walked with her once—in her father's gardens."

My voice was unsteady as his as I assured him that I would do as he asked. "But, Velasquez, have you had no medical care? Does Roma mean to let you die like a dog in this foul hole? I'm a non-combatant—"

"Sh-h!" came harshly from his lips. "You are a non-combatant, that is true. That is why you are alive, possibly—at least, why you are allowed the privileges of the place. You may be able to help Colonel Standart later, but you can do nothing for me without arousing the suspicion of Roma that your heart is entirely with the Americans. You must make him believe—make every one here in the prison believe—that you are merely a correspondent covering the invasion; that it matters nothing to you if Pindoro does not change flags. . . . Yes, and when you see Colonel Standart again, tell him it is the opinion of Velasquez that Roma is already scraping the bottom of his ammunition boxes."

There was a clatter at the outside gate now, and two gaily uniformed Spanish officers, followed by their orderlies, appeared presently in the prison court. The little Pindoroan sentries at the gate saluted with ludicrous gravity, pointed in my direction, and a moment later beckoned me to come.

Two pony carriages waited in the street, and into the first I was assisted, one of the officers and his "dog-robber" joining me. Away the spirited little beasts scampered up the main street. All but a few of the houses and stores were low and nipa-thatched, but the rising way was wide and commanded by the white stone palace ahead. The town

was so quiet that I remarked inwardly during the ride how few were the barefoot soldiers in the streets, though San Cristobal was threatened with beleaguerment. I reflected presently that the main bodies of men were doubtless in the trenches before the city.

The carriage turned through the massive iron gate into the palace gardens. These were rather extensive, royally perfumed, and gorgeous with blooms. Not a sound nor suggestion of war marred the beauty of the place. Beyond the rear wall of the palace grounds, and on still higher ground, I could see the gray walls of the monastery. The palace itself was ancient and splendid, suggestive of historic chambers and secret passages. The effect was startling when I remembered that this was but a tiny, torrid Malay isle. Old Spain had evidently built the palace while the evil days of decadence came not—a sumptuous bit of architecture in white marble. The sentries within the walls were Spanish, not Pindoroan, some of the very men, probably, who had betrayed Spain for the cause of the islanders. I was assisted up the great steps of the building, and shown into a dim but elegant room, where I was requested to await the pleasure of the Dictator.

General Roma appeared alone, after I had waited for about ten minutes. My first impression was that the man before me was rapidly degenerating physically. The puffed glands under his eyes, the flabby flesh of his jowl, wine's red clouds under the cuticle of his thickened throat—these, his excessive weight and heavy tread, suggested to me hardening of the arteries and softening of the brain. Yet his eyes were sharp, vital, serpent-wise, and his hands white, smooth, and shapely as a woman's might be. I remember his first cruel, careless glance; his start and sudden pallor, and then the low and continued laughter, bubbling out of a fat, florid face with closed eyes.

"Señor Ives, as I live, Señor Ives!" he chuckled in a sort of asthmatic fashion, really hideous to face and listen to. (He had aged and softened and grown squat since our passing in Hong Kong.) "Most gladly I welcome you! The white hair becomes you, Señor. I'm sure Miss Eulalie would approve of it, were she here."

Even though my inner consciousness refused to believe that the lady was not in Pindoro, tides of desolation were in flood within. For awhile he continued in this fashion—cringing and triumphant both in a sentence—as a man who feels, in quick alternation, the depression and inspiration of a drug. I noted his nervousness as he moved from window to window, lifting the shades impatiently, and the boldness of his look as he drew a chair before me and intently studied my face.

"I note by your credentials that you have turned war-correspondent, Señor Ives."

I did not let him see that his irony had not missed.

"You were riding with the American leader, I believe, when you

fell wounded," he continued. "Some of your effects were taken by my men, but most will be returned, I trust."

"Yes, I was riding with Colonel Standart's staff when I fell before one of your volleys. That was a very brilliant piece of work, General," I said with enthusiasm. "I have watched several interesting military campaigns, but I confess that I never saw nor heard of as crackling a bit of action as that other morning's battle. It is a fact that I heard in Manila, and beyond, of your genius for handling troops, but the way in which you cut up the American force, even outguessing the leader as to the hill intrenchments, and shaped your fire into the very heart of the enemy's command—fairly lifted me off my feet."

"And from your mule also, I was told," he added.

The corners of his thin lips lifted a little and his eyes gleamed very brightly. It was clear that the man's vanity was alive: that he wanted Spain to remember and America to repeat his name; that he was not stranger to the hate and heart-hunger of an exile. In a way, I was a logical instrument.

"Do American officers approve of correspondents attached to their staffs?" he inquired with thinly-veiled sarcasm.

"From the very courteous treatment I met on this expedition, I conclude that I was not unwelcome."

"There were no doubt many attractive things about this American colonel in command," he said, leaning forward to offer me a cigarette. "I regret that I had to kill him."

I started and must have paled. His eyes were boring into my face. "You know, General," I managed to say, with some steadiness, "I fell in the first volley. What happened in the American command after that, I have not learned. It is news, ugly news, indeed, to hear that Colonel Standart was killed."

"It was necessary," he replied coldly. "He was responsible for the invasion. Without him, its future is blasted. In trying to overthrow a government, an adventurer becomes a national enemy. . . . Were you very fond of him, my dear Señor Ives?"

"Of course," said I. "It was my privilege to be his guest for several days. I have talked and ridden with him—found him interesting and a delightful host. Naturally, it is a shock to learn that he is dead."

"No doubt," he said with a dry smile, peculiarly hateful.

"Do you think the future of the invasion is blasted without Colonel Standart?" I inquired.

"Oh," he said flippantly, "we may be bored with a few fitful attacks—a sort of twitching galvanism that lasts after the heart stops, you know."

Strangely enough, in the marrow of me, hope was not utterly dead.

Roma might be lying in order to study the effect of his words upon me; or he might have been lied to by the men who had charged apparently for the sole purpose of exterminating Standart and his staff; or, indeed, he might have been in doubt and wished to surprise the truth from me. I did not believe, moreover, that Roma was fatuous enough to believe that the Americans would leave Pindoro unconquered. I looked for another assault on San Cristobal, and I did not despair of taking the warm hand of the American Colonel again. . . . The constant memory of Velasquez made the man before me more and more odious.

Very artfully, the Spaniard now insinuated questions regarding Standart, the size of his force, his number of wounded, the character of his command, and other matters. I pretended to lose patience finally, and informed him that I had been sent to Pindoro in the capacity of a correspondent, not as a spy. He dismissed the matter with a quick laugh.

"I was only defending myself," he declared, his manner suddenly warming. "If you were unfaithful to your former host, I should hesitate to have you here with me. Really, I can learn all that I require to know about the enemy from my own scouts and spies."

I confess to being soothed, in spite of the fact that there was a suspicion of false fabric in the weaving of his words. Miserable, indeed, should I have been to accept as true that Standart was dead and Miss Roma away from the island. I wanted to think.

House-servants showed me to a room in the palace, where I found my haversack and credentials. Certain circular notes, not negotiable save under my signature, were returned, but my side-arms and gold, the latter amounting to about two hundred dollars, were missing. I did not comment upon this to Roma. Apparently no restrictions were placed upon my coming and going about the palace grounds, though I made no immediate attempt to pass the gate. My quarters were roomy and delightful, faced the west, and a marvellous valley stretched between my windows and the sunset horizon.

Yet I was haunted and harrowed by the thought of Eulalie Roma being away; and of that brave and beautiful lad, whom I saw no way yet to help, dying in that vermin-infested hole. . . . For myself, I might be considered lucky, indeed, to have escaped with a flesh-wound, and to be attired, housed, and served in a manner of elegance, but the food that I ate was bitter to me and the wines of my host soured in his presence. . . . In my heart, I was far from the impartial non-combatant which I affected under the hard bright eyes of Roma.

That evening I sat by my window staring into the west, where still wavered a blur of red, though the full night hung between. Stars and fireflies; the tread of a sentry on the stone-walk below; a warm

wind scented with fruit and spices; a cigar of perfection after an excellent dinner—all exterior things, in fact, designed for serenity; yet my head was hot with black and unavailing reflections. . . . I think that the consciousness of piano-music somewhere in the palace came to me gradually. At least, it was not until I heard a sweet voice singing and realized that the words were sung in English, that I leaped from my chair, opened my door, and listened intently in the spacious hallway.

V.

THE song ended. I caught up my hat and started in the direction of the music. The door of the piano-room was open, but the player sat in the dark. Twice I passed the door in the hall light, observed possibly by the woman at the piano, whom I could not see. . . . For twenty minutes' talk with Eulalie Roma (whom I did not doubt the unseen pianist to be) I would have endured the pain of another wound; yet any precipitous attempt on my part to meet her, instantly would destroy my comfortable standing in the palace. This was a morbidly strict guardianship of Serafin Roma. The fact that I had dined alone, too, was assurance that the General did not propose for me to become a part of the social activities of the palace. He joined me for a cigar in mid-evening after the music. Cordials of monastery bottling were hot in his veins, and his manner mellowed thereof. But his conversational leads were swift and keen, so that I became tense and still with concentration to preserve my position, and was utterly weary in mind when he left—bland, short-breathed, and chuckling like the devil. I often wonder now at the depth of the man's cunning, and what he meant to do with me. . . .

That was a night memorable for the length and misery of its hours. Even the dawn miracle, so swift to pass before drowsy eyes, was a dragging glory that wearied like some splendid pageant helplessly blocked upon a highway. But the morning was heavenly sweet—one of those cool, fragrant ideals, commanding all brilliant space between unflecked azure and radiant earth. I wondered long where I had seen such a morning before, and traced the clue back the years to country boyhood and the daybreak of one certain delectable Fourth. . . . Out in the gardens, before the sun had gathered up the jewels of dew, I encountered Eulalie Roma; also a swift romantic arousing in my breast that consumed tissues like the recent spectacle of battle.

How strange it was that first instant! Around the thrillingly personal appeal moved stirring thoughts and memories. Standart, Roma, war; the dive from the Oporto cliffs; the maiden's kiss and flight; the Hong Kong terrace and the chase around the world; the possible death-cell of Velasquez, one of her adorers, less than a mile away; the

charge of the gallant young Unknown of the Defenders—all these fused in the area of my ignited heart; and the effect of her eyes was like the first ecstatic, bewildering race of some magic elixir through the veins. Then for a second or more she became vague to me, so great was my emotion.

"Lancey Ives—your hair!" she faltered, leaning forward with a look of burning intensity. "What has made you suffer so?"

"White hair is a family trait, Eulalie," I said huskily. "I have not suffered more than I deserved, but I have searched for you ever since that day in Hong Kong—"

"Speak English," she commanded strangely. "I've come to abhor San Cristobal and all things Spanish. Tell me—oh, tell me—how you came here!"

I could not suggest my devotion that moment—with poor Velasquez dying without a word from her. Hastily I told her how I had learned in Manila of her father's supremacy in Pindoro, and much from her old friend Velasquez.

"What of him?" she asked. "I think we may talk for a few moments. My father is not abroad yet, and it is incredible that the sentries wilfully would make it unpleasant for you—or me. I remember the young officer of my father's staff. He was sent away on a mission and never returned. My father was bitterly grieved."

"Velasquez was sent away on a mission, and variously met with on the road by plunderers and assassins, but he fought his way through them and reached his destination. There was no such name as he was directed to. Apparently, it was not designed that he should reach the end of his journey. Velasquez proved this to his own satisfaction by examining the dispatches he carried. I believe the sealed and water-proof envelope he had guarded with his life contained some half-used blotting-pads."

I shall never forget the moment. Miss Eulalie had halted to face me, at a turn in the foot-path. The pure white riding habit she wore had the brilliance of a cloud in the splendid light; and behind, touching her skirts, were those marvellous poinsettia shrubs which distil the very essence of tropical fervor and burst forth in starry flames.

"Do you mean that my father planned to murder Velasquez?" she whispered slowly.

"That is my understanding."

"And why?"

"It appears that the deadly sin of Velasquez in the sight of General Roma was—if you'll pardon me—that he worshipped you."

"And, Lancey Ives," she exclaimed in sudden dismay, "why do you come to me with this intimate and dreadful revelation? . . . Oh, forgive me, there must be some meaning, some purpose, to what

you say. He was just a boy to me. I liked him for his nobleness and ingenuousness. I was angry at my father's constant watching. His surveillance is a steady, horrible pressure! But Velasquez—tell me—is he alive?"

"He was alive yesterday morning."

She seemed unable to wait for my words. "In God's name, quickly—what do you mean?"

"Velasquez finally caught a ship for Manila," I went on in haste. "When the Americans took over the Islands—he became the authority on Pindoro. Naturally, he felt inimical to your father. He was wounded and captured, even as I, in the recent fight. I think he was recognized, for his cell in the prison down yonder never was opened as mine was. They took decent care of me, but I have heard him cry out in half-delirium for water—with no one answering. Thus he lies in the dark, waiting for death. I stood with my back to the bars of his cell yesterday morning, so that the sentries would not think I was listening, and I heard Velasquez falter your name. Some of his sayings were a bit incoherent, but I am sure he spoke of walking with you in these very gardens. I learned to like—more than like—the boy."

She pressed her hand to her mouth and stared at me, the royal eyes filling with tears. The sensation in my brain—or was it in my breast?—was indescribable. . . . Her hand thrust toward me with a quick, pleading gesture.

"You were always strange, Lancey Ives! I am afraid—yet glad you have come. I have been away from real men and women so long—oh, please tell me what to do! I want—I want to go to him."

I am glad that I was decent enough to say, "You can bring him heavenly happiness—if he still lives."

"Will you go with me, Lancey Ives? Would it be well—with your wound?"

"The wound bothers but little. It is the attitude your father might take—and, then, do you think the sentries will allow me to pass the Gate?"

"They must," she said impatiently.

"It is best to consider well," I suggested. "What time does your father usually rise?"

"It is my custom to prepare his morning coffee and take it to him—sometimes as early as this," she replied. "Frequently he dozes for an hour or two afterward."

"For us to be seen together and appear to be attracted by the plight of poor Velasquez, would be serious, indeed," I declared. "I'm afraid it would lessen your freedom; and I, without a doubt, would be sent upon a mission across the island."

"My freedom!" she murmured bitterly. "Little have I known the meaning of it. If my thoughtless walks and talks with Señor Velasquez have brought him close to death, I must go to him, at least. I can pay the cost. But in doing this I must not weave a horrid fate about you!"

"Eulalie, I am willing to take any chances necessary," said I. "My only thought was to minimize them."

"That is wise," she answered quickly. "It is good to feel you wise, but unafraid."

"Our chances would be bright if your father decided not to rise for an hour or two after his coffee," I remarked tentatively. "By the way, the physician gave me a couple of sleeping powders last night, saying that they were tasteless in water or wine. I did n't use either—in fact, have them here."

She reflected a moment, studying me keenly and with half a smile. It occurred to me that I was conspiring against the Dictator rather precipitately. Excitedly she said:

"The physician gave them to you? Let me have one. I will think what is best to do. Listen, I shall go to my father now. It is nearly seven. . . . Do—do you think it safe—if he sleeps for an hour or two—for you to go with me?"

"Yes," I was impelled to say.

"In a half-hour, then, I shall ride out of the gates and pass you on the road to the prison. I'll be riding back by the time you reach there. Manage to meet me at the entrance. Say that you dropped or lost certain papers—anything—and wish to search. I shall insist upon going in with you. While you are looking, I'll wander to the cell-door—where Señor Velasquez—after that—"

"Good!" said I. "Yesterday, he was in the last cell to the right—four doors beyond the one I occupied. You shall see. . . . Just a minute, Eulalie—when I was taken prisoner, I had abundant money for a venture like this, but it was all taken—"

"You mean that money may be necessary to try to purchase silence?"

"Yes, and possibly proper food and attendance for Velasquez."

"I shall bring all we'll need," she said lightly, and turned toward the palace.

"One more thing," I concluded. "I told you first about Velasquez because his needs were so pitifully imperative, but there is another story which you must hear from me—more intimate and momentous—to me! I shall write the skeleton of it—in case we should not be allowed to meet again—but I should far rather tell you."

For an instant she gazed upon me, and repeated, "More intimate and momentous? . . . What can you mean?"

"It is true—just as I said—but Velasquez first," I declared.

"In case we are not permitted to meet again, Lancey Ives," she declared slowly, "I shall manage some way to secure your message."

I bowed, and she hurried away. So slender, swift, so abundantly beautiful, was she, that I thought the gorgeous morning and the radiant gardens a setting none too glorious for Eulalie Roma; and I caught my breath with a gasp as she turned from the foot-path to the main road, realizing that I must not forget to breathe.

VI.

LEFT alone, the conviction rapidly spread over my entire brain-surface that I was entering upon a very compromising adventure. A man who had shown an inclination to murder a young gentleman whom his daughter favored; who could handle a complicated field of troops with such effectiveness and strategy, even inspiring a flying wedge to crumple the hostile Colonel and staff—such a man, it clearly appeared to me now, would be difficult to checkmate on his own premises.

Moreover, Dictator Roma feared for his own life, as have so many leaders whose historic significance lies in their atrocious cruelty, devilish ambition, or consummate craft. A man who arrogantly acknowledges that he can learn all that is necessary concerning the enemy from his own spies in the enemy's command, is likely to be no novice in protecting himself from the eyes and fingers of espionage which his hated antagonist is apt to insinuate. . . . All this, and much more of the kind, started the honest sweat of apprehension from my considerable mileage of pores. In fact, I would not have been surprised to learn that one of Roma's spies had lain in the poinsettia-shrubs, attentively listening to my recent talk with Miss Eulalie. As for carrying out the prescribed adventure, without, at least, arousing suspicion, this appeared (now in the midst of dismal reaction) a hope ridiculously forlorn.

But I was too much of a coward to turn back on the enterprise. Paradox as this may seem, yet it accurately fits my emotions. What menacing, bristling fronts of peril will not a man face at the suggestion of a lovely woman—even a health-respecting man like myself, who has ever been willing to trust a field-glass to depict for him the seething vortices of human action, rather than to mingle naked-eyed within a cordon of smoke and flame! . . . But enough of this. That forenoon, I entered upon a sprightly season of activities, and the time for leisurely cogitations in this narrative is already overpast.

It was with no leap of joy that I was permitted to pass through the sally-port of the palace grounds. Not only was the pedestrian's door promptly opened for me, but I was blessed on the way with inimi-

table courtesy. Poor Velasquez would not be denied a last word with his adored one on account of any ground rules restricting her escort. San Cristobal was broad awake, and serene apparently as a city that had never known an enemy at her gates. Fruit, fish, garlic, coffee, wines, and cigarettes blithely rode the morning breeze in spirit. This is tropic Spain's own breakfast aroma; and invariably, to me, a swift stimulus while the day is yet cool. Just now it was a double-edged pang, for I was penniless. Moreover, my desire for coffee of Miss Roma's making, sans sleeping potion, was really disturbing.

The ringing patter of a galloping native-pony attracted my eyes far down the road toward the prison. In a moment or two the rider was past—a haggard, dust-stained Spanish officer spurring a drenched and all but spent mount. I watched until he drew up at the palace gate. Could it be a courier from the lines, bringing in word of an impending attack by the Americans? The Pindoroans in the street were nervously inquiring of one another this same question. Everywhere was increasing tension. Eulalie Roma presently overtook me, and I noted that every door and window was crowded with faces as she passed. It may have been unusual for the Dictator's daughter to ride alone. The cordiality of her greeting as she drew up her mount was for the eyes of the citizens.

"My father did not waken, but moaned in his sleep," she told me in an undertone. "I left the pot of coffee in a cosy beside his bed, drew the curtains, and slipped out."

"Did you use the powder?"

"Yes. It was soluble, and I could taste no change in the coffee."

"He may sleep without it long enough——"

"Yes, but I'm afraid we're not lucky," she said hastily. "There is some new activity among the Americans, I'm sure. A courier reached the palace gate as I rode out. I heard him tell the sentries that he had important messages for General Roma. But come, we must not turn back now. I feel strange—oh, I cannot express the sensation—but we must do what we can for Señor Velasquez. I shall be at the prison-door in ten minutes."

She had the sense and hand of a horsewoman, rode with balance and beauty. I always like to see a lady in a side-saddle—when she knows her place and does not look as if she held it by the grace of God alone. . . . Strange I felt also, nor could I analyze the emotions of that morning hour. I know that I was burning fast within, and that the distance was bright and attractive between us, and my impatience inordinate to diminish it. . . . She turned upon the highway again and approached leisurely, as I halted before the prison-gate. The sentries greeted me cordially, and one Spaniard expressed himself afflicted with an ineradicable sorrow that I had been detained so long

before my summons to the palace. The latter place, I was assured, was the only fit abode in San Cristobal for one of my fame and enlightenment. I explained (with the rhythmic canter of Miss Roma's pony playing upon the tympanum) that I had missed certain papers, valuable to me, but worthless to another, asking if I might not look through the cell I had occupied. The request was instantly granted, simultaneously with a greeting from the woman, this time in Spanish:

"A walk before breakfast, Señor Ives?" she called merrily. "Why not ride on such a glorious morning? It's far better than walking alone. . . . Ah, but I forget your wound! . . . What, do you like the prison well enough to return?"

Hat in hand and bending toward her stirrup, I explained the deplorable loss of my documents.

"But may I not go in with you?" she asked quickly, with a glance at the sentries. "I used to come to the prison very often. Besides, we can return together. Really, I must see your dungeon."

The soldiers disclaimed any orders to the contrary, acknowledging, moreover, that Señorita Roma was a law unto herself. With no particular curiosity to verify the last statement, we entered, and the lady evinced an instant interest in all concerns of the place and its inmates, while I examined the stones and shelf of my former cell with microscopic severity, audibly inquiring, for the benefit of the sentry accompanying me, if in delirium I might not have concealed the papers in some impossible crevice. Outside, I heard the paupers and prisoners calling God to witness their gratitude for the Señorita's gifts of money.

. . . And at last these words:

"Ah, Mr. Sentry, why is this cell locked? And who is the poor wounded soldier within?"

This was my cue to emerge. Miss Roma was staring intently into the darkness where Velasquez had lain the day before. Also I noted the perturbation of the soldiers.

"He is moaning for water!" the woman cried excitedly, running toward the well. "Why is this door kept locked? Who is the prisoner?"

"We only know that he is a deserter from the Defenders, captured in the recent battle," one of the sentries hastened to say. "We cannot allow him in the heat of the court, lest his fever mount higher. Only a humane general like your father, Señorita Roma, would take a deserter *alive* in time of war."

"Open the door and let me give him water!" she demanded. "This is a terrible mistake. I know the man. My father will be horrified at this!"

Miss Roma's acting amazed me. Indeed, I had to hold fast to my absolute knowledge of the case, in order not to be stirred by her lead.

"We were told that it was your father's order, Señorita, that this man be held here," averred the Spaniard, unlocking the cell.

"Did my father come here to see him?" she countered instantly.

"No."

"Do I not tell you that there is an error of identity? This man was one of my father's most trusted lieutenants and one of my best friends in San Cristobal before the rebellion. Is it necessary for me to speak aloud the meaning of his presence among the Americans?"

The inference that Velasquez had been one of Roma's spies with the invaders was as startling as convincing. Her command of the situation was irresistible. The barred door was swung wide, and the woman entered with a cup of water. . . . It was a queer moment. I remember the lustrous profile, deep gloom before her, vivid sunlight behind, and the swift change from imperiousness to pity. There was an orient of emotions in the expressional range of her lovely face. . . . Another horseman galloped past the prison entrance in the direction of the palace.

"A second courier, possibly," I told the excited sentries. "The first brought news of fresh activity on the part of the Americans. Señorita Roma met him at the palace gate."

"Señor Ives—won't you come here a moment?" the woman called.
"Please lift the poor boy while I hold the water to his lips."

Velasquez drank feverishly, but could not take his eyes from her face. With her moistened handkerchief, the lady cooled and cleansed his forehead and lips.

"I could not die from a dozen wounds, Miss Roma, if you were near me," he whispered.

"I shall try to come again," she answered. "If I can't—oh, you must understand! . . . Any way, you shall be treated better, and I'll keep thinking, thinking—that you are getting well! You are too brave to die like this."

"Any way, I shall be happy because you came."

His fine eyes were unnaturally large in contrast to the wasted face, and thrillingly bright as they followed her hungrily to the light. Veritably, it seemed as if they could not let her go—that his heaven was built about her. . . . I saw her turn back impulsively and touch her hand to his forehead, but the sentence she uttered—I never knew. . . . In the court again, she gave the soldiers money, promising more if the needs of the wounded prisoner were well supplied.

"Say nothing to any of the officers," she whispered. "In due time I shall bring you further orders from—the palace. One of the noblest men in Pindoro—*whose work one dare not publicly praise*—lies in your care."

For a little way, I strode at her stirrup.

"I should not care to defend a city against a siege of yours, Eulalie," I said laughingly. "It would be easier to withstand fleets of the air."

"Do not speak of it," she answered quickly. "Always when I want a thing, the words come to my lips. I am afraid of myself. I love the truth always, save when it will not suffice—like this—when it would have kept me from doing a good deed. I must have been conceived in intrigue. Tell me—this second revelation—no, I forget—we must not be seen together, but I shall watch for the opportunity."

So strange and penetrating was the glance suddenly turned down upon me, that she must have received some vague psychic inkling of the big thing in my brain. I was about to speak when she spurred forward, saying that she would manage some way before night either to hear or read the message I had for her.

The rising road to the palace was a weary ordeal. I was faint and uncertain of limb, and the flesh about my wound felt hot and throbbing. It seemed hardly credible that only yesterday I had been removed from the prison to the palace. There was good in having caused the blessing to fall upon Velasquez; rare sweetness in her swift compassion.

A column of barefooted Pindoroan infantry, whose officers were largely Roma's deserters, followed by a little battery of ancient field-guns, turned from the big bamboo barracks to the highway as I neared the palace gate. Watching from a doorway, it was easy for me to perceive that this was no mere parade nor practice march. I saw the pallor of death's fear here and there under the brown faces of the line. Never in my own organism was the appetite for battle so pitifully weak. The men at the gate, too, were ashen and low-voiced as they bowed me through; and officers hurried up and down the drive and stood in ever-changing groups on the steps and before the entrance of the palace. I passed to my own apartment apparently unnoticed, removed the dust from my boots, then rang for breakfast. It was but a little after eight. The Spanish servant responding was of butler proportions and new to me. I inquired for the man who attended me yesterday.

"He is busy in the General's room, sir," he replied. "The morning has been a troubled one for all of us. First a courier comes with word that the Americans are moving close to the city. Then we carry the news to the General's chamber and find it impossible to rouse him. I'm afraid he is very ill, sir—and Mother Mary help us if the General can't take command! The doctors are working over him."

My good hand went involuntarily to my breast pocket where the second sleeping powder lay. . . . Those powders had been intended for me. . . . Through me, Eulalie Roma had put one of them into her father's coffee. . . . My intelligence wavered for an instant before the vision of her horrified, accusing face.

"This is indeed harsh news," I managed to say. "Bring me breakfast as soon as convenient. You think that the Americans cannot be repelled a second time—without General Roma in command?"

He shrugged his fat shoulders apprehensively. "We all have our thoughts, but it is not a servant's place to express them. Yet every one knows, sir, that the brain of the Defenders is in General Roma's skull."

"And that brain is asleep," I muttered, when the door was closed. . . . What would this mean to Eulalie Roma? I considered long, the heat waxing in my temples. . . . Presently the idea possessed me that American activity was assurance that Colonel Standart was not dead. Donovan might harry and raid by night, but that he should lead a second attack so soon upon San Cristobal was unthinkable. The suggestion of the sleeping powder spoiled my zeal for Pindoroan coffee, but I broke my own eggs, and ate the toast unbuttered. . . . I wished Pindoro were mine for the day—with only Eulalie Roma besides.

VII.

STEPPING into the hallway after breakfast, I met Eulalie Roma. The look in her white, frightened face bade me follow. It was like facing a murder charge. We reached the rear balcony and were alone. Before her eyes, I faltered—as I have faltered in describing them here.

"Lancey Ives"—her voice was as from one wounded to the heart—"my father lies in an unconscious state, from which the physician cannot rouse him. You gave me a—sleeping powder two hours ago. This on a day when the couriers promise a battle. Can it be—I would rather die than think so—that you are what I represented that poor wounded prisoner to be—a spy?"

"I beg of you—don't hold such a thought," said I.

"But my father seems mortally stricken, and the attack on the lines is expected momentarily, and it was so strange. You had the powder—so ready. . . . There could be no greater blow to the Defense—not that I care for that—but you—it is strange that you are here! And then you knew so much about Velasquez—about me—"

Her terror was pitiful. "Was my effort to make Velasquez happier in what seems to be his dying, the likely work of a spy? Don't you see that I took every chance with my life even—when I went to the prison with you?"

"But the sleeping powder—and my father will not rouse!" she faltered again.

"Could I divine that you were accustomed to prepare morning coffee for your father? . . . Listen, Eulalie, last night in the hallway I met the doctor. He handed me this powder and the one I gave

you, with the suggestion to take at least one in case my wound kept me awake. I hate such things, and did not use either—fought it out undrugged until daylight. The point is, if your father was poisoned, it was by a powder intended for me to swallow. I can hardly believe this, for I would not have been brought to the palace to die. It would have been so simple to turn the trick back yonder in the prison."

"I believe you are speaking the truth. Oh, I must believe it! . . . It came to me like death, Lancey Ives, that you had used me—your old playmate—to assist in an act of treachery! . . . It was worse than many poisonings! I realized that I had only known you for one day since we were children; that as the world reckons we were strangers—though it was not so in my heart——"

The sound of firing reached us at this instant from far down the Espiritu Santo trail.

"I must run back to him!" she cried. "Watch for me here again in a little while. I am believing in you—every moment, Lancey Ives!"

Up and down the great hall, and repeatedly the length of the rear balcony, I paced impatiently, awaiting Miss Roma to join me, or, indeed, any turn of affairs. On an eminence just behind the rear wall of the palace grounds, stood the ancient gray buildings of a monastery, its walls surrounded by virgin jungle. No sign of life was visible in the place of holy orders; nor, indeed, any scar of intrenchments on the bluffs which commanded the valley to seaward. The distant firing was extremely puzzling—a rather steady pecking away, as from a concealed battalion of sharp-shooters, which had the range of a segment of the enemy's column.

The palace was almost destitute of officers. Of Roma's aides, I as yet knew nothing, but surmised that the Dictator's rule had been so absolute both in peace and war, that he had not developed any particular genius of command. Whatever the servants of the house thought of Roma as a master, they certainly believed in him alone as equal to the occasion of preserving their necks, both official and corporeal. A quiet but far-reaching funk seemed to clutch the entire premises as the day advanced. The detention of Miss Roma in the chamber of illness preyed upon me at last, until I dared postpone no longer writing the declaration of my love. Many furious moments in my room were thus occupied. Pocketing the utterly insufficient document finally, I went abroad once more. . . . A light step, a light touch upon the arm, and Miss Roma was before me on the rear balcony. Always the presence of her startled.

"Your father's condition?" I managed to say.

"Much the same," she said briefly. "He is not conscious. Without constant stimulants, his heart action subsides to mere fluttering."

Her hopelessness chilled me. I feared her suspicions had returned, and I could not bring myself to deliver the paper—when this look was in her eyes.

"You don't believe me a plotter in your house, Eulalie?"

"Please don't judge me, Lancey Ives," she said quickly. "I have been sorely pressed. San Cristobal has become a haunting horror to me. I feel that my father is to die—and I have rebelled so much against him. Spanish troops should never have led these Pindoroans. This murderous war should not have been—but my father is dying! And poor stricken Velasquez; and you—it was for no good that I can dream of that they brought you here from the prison. . . . Oh, why did you come here—after all these eternities, Lancey Ives?"

"Ever since that day in Hong Kong——"

"Don't now!" she exclaimed.

I was frightened by the bloodless, haggard look of her face. A servant came hurriedly to report that she was needed in her father's chamber. I felt her suffering, but it was later still in the day when I began to fathom her fortitude.

"Be so careful what you do!" she whispered hastily. "You may be in deadly peril. God forbid that I bring the fate of Velasquez—upon you!"

As midday approached, the heat became an abomination. Even in the great dim halls of the palace, the hot blasts seemed undiminished by the chill of the vast marble surfaces. I was a-nettle with nerves, and the lights of the future were entirely eclipsed in gloom. There was still no change to the strange manner of the fighting in the direction of the port—a sort of steady but leisurely-ordered rifle-practice. In my room, I sloughed coat and shoes and dropped upon the bed with a fan. It may have been a half-hour later that I was drawn up through vague degrees of dream to a borderland consciousness, then roused fully by shock of cannonading. The stimulating undertone of the rifles, much nearer and tripled in volume, told me (as I hastily wriggled into canvas shoes) that the Americans were closing in and that Roma's men were heating their batteries in defense. Seizing my hat, I rushed *coatless* to the rear balcony.

The powder smoke was filmy in the noon-day glare. The attack was fighting from the outer intrenchments of the Pindoroans, not more than two miles away. The battle was rudimentary compared to the former one. Here was a mere duel of straight-fronts. The Defenders supported their infantry with a few crude field and mountain guns—to what effect I could not, of course, judge. The whole affair looked tame and sleepy from the distance, like that of a long-enduring siege wherein the fighting has degenerated into a day's work. I had watched the game for about ten minutes, and closed my eyes to rid them from

the sting of the intense sunlight, when a sudden premonitive flash swept into consciousness. The meaning of this warning struck me like a blow less than ten seconds later, and I rushed back to my room. Miss Roma passed me in the hall. Only distantly I noted her white, tortured face, and heard, without answer—as if her words were not for me:

“How horrible it is!”

My coat hung over the chair of my room, as it had been left, but the ghastly fear was a fact. The letter I had written containing the story of my love and search for Eulalie Roma had been stolen in my absence.

VIII.

I SAT down on the edge of the bed to think. The thing was written in English. I had felt extremely conscientious about making everything plain—even what I had ascertained from Velasquez. I recalled intently now the part I had played under Roma's eyes—the alleged impartial non-combatant, I, who had not tolerated any questions whatever regarding the invaders. The fact that I was ill in body and brain, and that I had rushed forth to the balcony almost before I was fully awakened, did not suffice to dull the edge of my self-scorn, since it altered not at all the price I must pay for such damnable negligence.

Of this price, there could be but one qualification. If General Roma died without regaining consciousness, my own fate might not be executed immediately. I had written Miss Roma personally and in words foreign to Pindoro, although I did not doubt there were Spaniards in the force who could read English. However, Roma's staff might require time to translate my devotional letter—so intimate to her, so deadly to Velasquez, and so perfectly designed to make me insupportable in Spanish eyes. But I did not forget that the staff was being sadly overworked this day. There was a chance of life, too, in the possibility of the Americans suddenly breaking full-powered through the Defenders and entering the city. . . . With Roma restored to consciousness, however, it was clear that I became eligible at once for extermination. The quick advantage his spies had taken of my brief absence from the room was ultimate proof of the slight esteem in which I was held in the palace.

The need occurred to me suddenly as imperative to explain to Miss Roma what had happened. Fluently perspiring, I hurried out into the corridor just in time to see the lady vanish into her father's apartment, and the corpulent butler-person who had attended me that morning emerge from the same. Most politely he inquired if I were ready for luncheon.

"Yes," said I; "bring it in any time—with a bottle or two of wine. . . . By the way, what is the last from General Roma?"

He brightened visibly. "The physician says that the General is rallying, Señor."

I needed wine, not that I felt any more depleted or unsteady than before finding my pocket rifled, but to lift me out of a sort of decisionless apathy which was the worst possible condition of mind to deal with the present contingency. I view with interest now the fact that I was wholly unafraid; not that I normally am in the least senseless to personal danger, but because it shows the peculiar adjustment of a sick man's brain to what seems inevitable. In truth, I should have been in an ice-pack, for I was being consumed by fever from over-exertion, the stress of the events, and the terrific heat of the day. The wine deadened the scald and throb of my wound, but incited false energy. For the first time in my life, I drank two bottles of an aged and delectable vintage at one sitting; then determined to get a glimpse of the Pindoroans in action.

Out of the palace grounds, and down the main road again, I passed without hindrance. Roma's guns were emplaced on the shoulder of the heights of San Cristobal. The battery was engaged in the terrific labor, and I watched the half-naked toilers, not as one dazed with sounds and choking with powder-reek, but with the dull sort of fascination a man feels when a picture-show restores an activity he has witnessed long before. . . . Standart, or some American leader, got the range of Roma's battery at length, and the blind steel slugs began to feel for flesh. They tore through the tinder-dry thickets about my ears with instant deafening crashes, which, if prolonged, would have been exactly like the racket of a passing train. With hideous impassivity, I now saw a spectacular bit of tragedy. A steel bullet rung the bell on the barrel of one of the three-inch guns. The sound struck me as resembling something one hears occasionally in city streets. I thought of it afterward—the cover of a man-hole dropping into place! The bullet glanced upward and struck the gunner between the eyes. He pitched forward quivering upon the hot metal.

Without warning, and with the suddenness of an overfed infant, I became ill—then moved away. The afternoon was crowded with events, but the memory of most of them was lifted entirely out of mind with the passing of the trance which thralled me in those hours. Finally, however, I remember crossing the Espiritu Santo trail to study the right wing of the Defenders, when the real tragedy of their situation was made plain. It was as Velasquez had divined: Roma's men were scraping the bottoms of their ammunition-boxes.

The commander here was the young gallant who had been the point of the wedge driven between the troops of Major Leever and Colonel

Standart in the previous battle—and whose name Roma had not deigned to give me. He was exhorting his men to hold their fire for a mark; to send one American to the hall-rooms of hell with every round of ammunition. He cheered them with promised rest at night; declared great caldrons of food were preparing up yonder in the city, and that wines and coffee and fruits were waiting for the thirsty! But to make the bullets count, was his high and constant cry. Even then I warmed again to this valiant liar.

The slopes held by the Defense, which had looked so naked from the American position, proved to be sheltered somewhat by low but thick vegetation. Thus it was impossible for the white man to reckon accurately the strength of the force about me, but still I could not fathom a strategy of Standart—if he were in command—that delayed a charge so long. He acted to me like a leader who has been once badly whipped and is gun-shy. The fact was, he could have bored with little loss through Roma's infantry that afternoon and breathed the cool of evening in the capital.

An idea quite irrational now gripped me with tenacity. It was to remain out with the lines until dusk, then to dash across the fire-zone into the American lines. How possible this was to my real nature can be judged from the fact that Eulalie Roma did not reckon in the *coup*. Craftily I moved from place to place on the field, so as to give no particular Spanish leader the impulse to regard me as his especial charge. Roma's second in command, one Del Pinar, was on the field, but I avoided the commanding position. . . . Once—to this day I am not sure whether it was truth or dream—my eyes filled with the fine figure of Colonel Standart, mounted, swiftly crossing the Espiritu Santo trail from cover to cover far below. . . . Burning with fever and thirst, I watched the shadows creep down the slopes and marked, by their length and deepening, the end of that strange terror of a day. With the inner lines of defense still unbroken and Roma still alive, I smarted under the thought that the Americans had lost their best chance.

"Señor Ives! Señor Ives!" was called through the darkness. I was huddled in a rifle-pit which was emptied in the dusk. The call might have been repeated a dozen times, but it did not occur to me to answer, nor did I hope to remain undiscovered in the very midst of the bivouac. A dazed, hell-careless "Let them find me" must have been my attitude. Death would have been sweet for a half-gallon of cold water. Fear of being taken back to Roma could not stand beside the thought of *the fountains in the palace grounds!* Reaching the Americans alive was less than this haunt.

"Señor Ives, the civilian correspondent?" a soldier asked.

"Yes, yes—what of him?" the original voice demanded impatiently.

"He was here before dark."

"*Caramba!* He was everywhere before dark. Where is he now?"

I watched the heavens from the black pit. The big stars doubled and fused together; the rest were crazed constellations to my eyes. A bayonet pricked my shoulder.

"Ugh, what is it?" I asked with a start, blinking up at a lantern, between me and the eyes of the butler person.

"Ah, Señor Ives—everywhere I have looked for you! General Roma sends his compliments and asks you to join him at the palace at once."

I tried to rise, but dropped back again. The servant's hand was thrust down.

"Hah!" he said, as mine touched his. "You burn, Señor, you burn with fever."

He called a soldier to help him, and they lifted me from the trench. In truth, I was not past walking a bit, though I refused. The fat-faced servant was distasteful to me, and my brain formed fitting ways to tell him so. I was more ugly than afraid, quite savage, indeed, that Roma was alive.

"Get a stretcher," the soldier was ordered, and I dropped down upon the turf, to plan devilish arraignments of Roma when I reached the palace, and horrible revenges upon this fat-faced, spying butler-dog. Quite a peculiar state of mind, and all its disorder moved to the tinkle and splash of the palace fountains. Very cunningly, I decided not to tell of the water in the grounds, lest they shut off the streams before I got there. It was my thought to leap into one of the cool basins and drink and drink and drink. As a matter of fact, I fell semi-conscious when the stretcher was brought, only stirred when transferred to an ambulance, and did not really rouse again until I was in my room at headquarters, and the most exquisite of human sensations was mine to repletion. It was a dry wine, iced and plentifully diluted with water. For the panting butler who served me until I asked no more, there was left no further hate in my heart.

"And now, Señor," he said blandly, "it will be well for you to make an effort to see the General. He awaits eagerly."

He was cooling my forehead and wrists with cracked ice as he spoke. "Lead away," said I, and presently hooked to his fleshy arm. The insensate rage had left my brain for the moment, but the faculties were clouded and impotent. . . . Roma was propped up in bed, the face wasted and tallowy, his black eyes lit with the expiring brain. At his bedside was Miss Eulalie and a tall, dark, middle-aged Spanish officer with a twitching, flexible mouth, who proved to be Del Pinar, next to Roma in command. It was my first glimpse at him closely. All eyes were fixed upon me. The butler-person helped me to a chair

and backed from the room. Del Pinar had evidently been reporting the events of the day to his superior, and had halted at my entrance.

"Go on, General," said Roma. His voice was quavering, and his teeth interfered in a peculiar way with each word. "This is Señor Ives, who is with us body and soul."

IX.

GENERAL DEL PINAR resumed his report, dwelling especially upon the slow and clumsy movements of the enemy, and the spiritless character of the attack as a whole.

"I realized well where to strike the hardest blow in the former battle," Roma observed with that clacking utterance that scorched my nerves, "but I confess, General, that I did not quite appreciate the extent of havoc the death of the American leader would cause."

The black, burning eyes of the Dictator pinned mine as he spoke.

"I rather hated to hear of this Standart falling mortally wounded, too," Roma added. "They say he is a young man. . . . Señor Ives, did you, too, find the day's work dull? I hear you went to sleep over it this afternoon."

"Yes; a long, dry day, General," said I. Sweat started from me with the effort of putting each word into place. (Strange how one must expatiate at such a time, when simple "yes" or "no" would suffice.) "A touch of sun or fever or both—got me at the last."

He watched me until I thought I must fly at his throat. Instead, words broke forth. I told of the ricochet from the gun to the gunner's brain; how the bare breast of the gunner sizzled on the hot tube as he sprawled forward, and ended quite insanely by inquiring after the General's health. I might have gone on save for a touch upon my arm, and the low words of the woman:

"Señor Ives is delirious, Father! He must be taken to his room at once!"

"Sweet solicitation, dear. How benighted must a man's fate be—to be ill without a woman's sympathy! Our American guest will be detained but a moment, child. I've arranged for him to be taken to a cooler and quieter place—"

The physician entered hastily at this point and begged the General to speak no more. It appeared that this was but one of many similar expostulations on the doctor's part. Roma ignored him utterly, demanding that he be not interrupted.

"I was about to add, Señor Ives," he went on, in his dentally disordered way, "that you should not leave your manuscripts about so carelessly in future. Of course, in time of war, my servants are very watchful. In fact, at no other time would your paper have been

brought to me. I suppose it is about Colonel Standart. Are you preparing his obituary for the northern press?"

An idea quite as vicious as his now seized me—to goad him into the excitement which the physician so mortally dreaded. He lay before me almost rigid save for his eyes, wherein the devil was alive. My brain was flighty with lies; the difficulty was to sort and send them home. I builded better than I dreamed.

"Progressive newspapers always have ready obituaries for important men. There is one at hand for you, General, and one for Colonel Standart, which will not be used just yet, however. Your officers cannot be familiar with the American in command, if they tell you he is dead. I picked out Colonel Standart clearly this afternoon on the Espiritu Santo trail—without a field-glass."

His jaw relaxed for the first time, and his tongue rolled drunkenly. A film dulled the burning in his eyes. Out of an inarticulate mumbling, prolonged and hideous, I realized, even though his face was now hidden by the doctor and Miss Roma bending over, that his frenzy was to give the lie to my words. Beyond a doubt, I was obsessed by some cool fiend, for I said, turning to Del Pinar:

"Ah, the General has excited himself. I only meant to add—though you no doubt observed the same—that Standart did not use half his force to-day. Do you think he plans to attack to-night?"

"Put that destroyer out of the room!" roared the doctor.

Pinar lifted and shoved me to the door. "Wait here!" he commanded brutally. . . . I leaned for a moment against the shut door. The stricken man's throat was filled with bestial sounds.

The momentary emptiness of the great marble hall suddenly startled me to consciousness of my own peril. My first thought was to flee from the palace, but recalled that I would be noted, if not detained, at the gates. As I approached the veranda, steps sounded from the stones and the jingle of a scabbard. To my right was the door of the music-room ajar and—darkness within! Here was subtle attraction. Striking a match, I made sure I was alone, and perceived also that there was no place for concealment. A door, however, opened into another apartment in the direction of the Dictator's chamber. Entering this stealthily, I caught a faint perfume, instantly familiar. The furious pumping of my heart turned me giddy, for the delicate fragrance in my nostrils had been sensed before—only in the presence of Eulalie Roma.

Another flare proved that I had committed the unspeakable action of entering her sleeping-room; yet that instant, as I would have withdrawn, footsteps in the hall without compelled me to accept for the moment this offered refuge. In the light of a further match, I discovered a huge and massive dresser with a high mirror attachment,

slanting across the corner of the room. Pocketing the burnt match-stubs, I drank deeply from a water-bottle on the centre-table, and groped toward the dresser. The heavy furniture rolled out with little noise, and back again—with me behind. For my own momentary safety I could have done no wiser thing than just this, but plainly normal faculties could never have brought me to accept sanctuary in a young woman's chamber, any more than they would have permitted me to goad the Dictator into frothing impotence.

I was no sooner still than the realization came that the partition at my back separated me from Roma's room. The inhuman mumblings from the throat of the General were just audible, with an occasional word from Del Pinar or a command from the physician. Hurried steps were now frequent in the hallway. Suddenly I heard my name spoken outside; then the voice of Pinar ordering some one to see if I were in my room. The butler-person replied a moment later:

"No, sir. The room is dark, and he's not there."

Roma's cries subsided. There was a snappy curse from Del Pinar, and the fat servant next came in for a perfect little thing of its kind in the way of scorching abuse, with these orders on top:

"Search the palace and grounds! Warn the sentries at the gates to let no one out. Send a man there first. If he has already passed out, find Major Calletta, the officer of the day, and have him start the entire sentry system on the lookout. Get your establishment to work—except two or three servants to wait on the doctor. Find this American within an hour, or you'll think the enemy has entered the palace."

Hunched in the darkness behind the dresser, I studied and weighed the occasional waves of ideas which crossed my mind. This was a rather pitiful attempt to preserve rationality against fitful rushes of absurd impulses. For instance, I was once on the point of stepping forth, for no other reason than to enjoy the discomfiture of Del Pinar, who was ready to overturn the city for me. Then I had a devilish desire to spur Roma into further spasms. The fact that I instantly forfeited what puny chance of life was left me, even by making a sound, was little more than enough to enable me to sit tight. . . . What was my idea of escape in those first moments? I scarcely know. Possibly some blind hope that the palace would change hands in the night. The hurried but heavy step of the corpulent domestic presently roused me to listening. Del Pinar joined him in the hall.

"He has not passed the gate, General," the former panted. "No doubt he's in the gardens somewhere. We'll bring him in presently."

Pinar made no verbal answer. A moment later the door from the chamber into the hall was opened, and I saw Miss Roma halt in the aperture and beckon. Del Pinar joined her.

"Is he dying?"

For the first time since dusk, I felt a quiver of humane emotion. Hopeless and pitiful were her whispered words.

"My God, I pray not," Del Pinar answered. "I shall learn what the doctor says of his condition and tell you. He was doing so well until that infernal American—"

"But," she interrupted quickly, "the doctor begged him not to have the interview with Señor Ives to-night. My father's words were edged with irony, and the American was delirious with fever."

"Not so delirious, Miss Roma, but he could turn the vanishing trick very neatly. Without question, this Ives is the most dangerous of spies. I doubt not but that he has organized a system in our midst. At all events, I'll stop his activity to-night."

"Do you mean *execution*?" she asked hoarsely.

"That is for General Roma to decide."

"But if my father should die—would you——?"

"Let us not think of that now. I'll speak to the doctor for you. Please take a little rest and refreshment here. Being with him only adds to your strain. Then, too, he is silent now."

The woman entered, closed and locked the door, but made no light. Crossing the room, she knelt by the open window, not two yards from me. The mighty anguish long pent in her breast broke forth.

"My God and my mother," she prayed passionately, "I beseech Thee that these pitiful little people be lifted from war, and the making of war be taken from the hands of my father—and I implore Thee for the life of my American!"

There was a full minute of silence. The pure passion of her prayer seemed to cleanse and cool my brain. The imminent return of Del Pinar alone withheld me then for calling her name. . . . Out of the silence arose a horrid outcry in the next room:

"Bring in this reptile spy who says Standart lives! Bring him here!"

Miss Roma rushed out of the room. I heard the doctor and Del Pinar imploring the Dictator to control himself, but above their voices mounted again the hardly articulate scream:

"Bring him here—with the ghost of Colonel Standart he saw to-day! Ghosts—they shall ride together to-night! Bring him to me!"

Thus he raved, until I shut my ears and the hideous turmoil became as the murmur of bees. When I relaxed my fingers at length, the Dictator was gasping, "Eulalie!" and again, "Eulalie!" . . .

Followed that mysterious revealing silence. . . . Many moments passed before the words of Del Pinar reached me:

"Neither the army nor the servants must hear of this until the battle is over."

It was his first command as chief—and a cringing one. . . .

The pitiful human pawns had been lifted, indeed, from beneath the hands of Serafin Roma.

Del Pinar allowed the decent interval of an hour to pass before he allowed his rage at my disappearance to manifest itself in brutalizing the domestic force of the palace. He was a ruffian. The Spanish species of this type of soldier is rather a monster of discipline, though not necessarily a courageous fighting-man. His voice was now heard in the palace halls. I heard the servants and soldiers grumbling in the gardens, in the moat under the windows. The orders of Del Pinar were rapid and forked with flame, covering every clot of darkness in the groves and shrubbery; every out-house, stable, and servants' quarter. The palace itself was so simple in its elegance, as easily to be searched. The two great marble stairways were barred by iron wickets for the night, so that the official suites on the upper floors were eliminated. Light was thrown into every corner of the music-room, save the boudoir, which I had preëmpted. . . . Too much perhaps have I dwelt upon my own sensations and endurings; suffice it to say that I was half-suffocated and verging toward insensibility from fever when Miss Roma returned to her room, escorted by Del Pinar, who made light for her.

"He could not have got away without assistance," the General was saying. "That he has accomplices among us, is the formidable part of the affair. We cannot even trust the sentries at the gate. Why, the rascal has literally dematerialized! I—nor any one—could not move twenty feet in the city without being challenged, and yet the fiend remains unreported."

"Oh, you 'll find him right enough, General," she said desperately. "I cannot think he is a spy. He was burning with fever and has lain down somewhere—fallen unconscious. I 'm sure you 'll find it so, and I beg of you not—not to order his death hastily."

"We have enough to repel the Americans without risking a worm in the heart of the Defense," he replied brusquely, but added with some gentleness, "I only hope you are right—that he has '*fallen unconscious*' somewhere. . . . Good-night."

The turn of the lock startled me into shame. I saw her white arm raise to draw the shade of the nearest window; heard her move to the other, then turn the bolt in the door connecting the music-room. A moment later only the dresser was between us, and the sweet woman sighed—possibly at her own reflected image. . . . May she never again be able to express in her darkest hour such sorrow, such tumult, as was borne to me in that one long-drawn breath. Softly, slowly, as I had studied for hours, I whispered:

"Eulalie Roma, pray don't be frightened! It is I, Lancey Ives, behind your dresser!"

X.

HER gasp and recoil were like a knife to me.

"Please don't be frightened!" I begged. "I'm ready to go out at your first word. It was an accident. I darted into the music-room upon leaving your father—then penetrated here. I did not know, in the darkness, except the fragrance reminded me of you—"

"In Heaven's name, hush!"

"I am at your service—only, don't let me terrify you, please."

My pressure upon this one point, and a possible whine of weakness in my voice, assured her of my condition.

"Hush, don't think of me! Del Pinar will have you executed if you are caught. You are safe for the minute. There must be some ultimate redemption in your stumbling here—for they dare not search this room. Let me think—let me think!"

I waited in silence, marvelling at her courage after such a night; marvelling also that I was not poison to her as the result of my last words to the Dictator. For a full minute she stood motionless in the centre of the room; then turned the lamp low, drew a rocker close to the dresser, and whispered:

"They are still searching for you. Perhaps—perhaps you had better not come out—at least, now. Are you still fevered?"

"I do not know. It is nothing," said I, and circled back to my dread of compromising her.

"I beg of you, say no more about that!" she broke in impatiently. "This is life or death. I prayed for your life. Reflect, I am not a child! Let me feel your hand. . . . God pity you—you are burning up! It is stifling back there. Help me move the dresser with as little noise as possible. You must come out!"

I demurred, but to no avail. My barricade was drawn forth with hardly a sound. She put the light out entirely, lifted the shade from one of the windows, and drew a chair for me beside it. Water was then brought, and four little tablets, the nature of which I did not inquire, though they brought to mind the sleeping powder. Eulalie's nearness, her noiseless ministering; the locks, the darkness, the night breeze; her instant and entire trust—these had a deep, unspeakable appeal. A moment passed before I commanded words:

"Do you think still that I am a spy?"

"Forgive me," she answered, and quickly explained: "When the couriers came this morning with word of the Americans, servants tried vainly to waken my father. The doctor was called. The coffee which I thought he had drunk had been taken away cold, untouched. I inquired all about it this afternoon. I should have done that first, but I was so overwrought—"

"I am grateful that you found out—that it was possible for you to learn the truth," said I; "but to-night—some devil held my mind——"

"We'll forget all about that," she answered hastily, shivering with dread. "I am trying to put it all from me! . . . The doctor warned my father against a second stroke. We all pleaded with him not to call you. He must have seen you at Hong Kong. . . . I think he had some sinister—some purpose we shall never know in bringing you here. You were in his mind strangely, horribly—bigger in importance seemingly than the fighting. He insisted that you be brought before him. . . . You were harshly driven. I knew you were not responsible—because you even made your own case more desperate. We must forget all that."

"I wish I could forget all that I have done so ill to-day. I meant, Eulalie—I wanted to be strong and valuable to you—some one upon whom you could rely, if not for great wisdom, at least for my life's best intent."

She breathed quickly and whispered: "How I have needed such a one, Lancey Ives! You are ill now, but I feel your valor and loyalty—but how I have needed such a one! Can you think what it means to me—this alliance of Spaniard and Pindoroan? Can you think what every death and wound of this war means to me—this war of my father's making? Can you dream how you tortured me to-night when you told of the gunner falling upon the hot tube? . . . I tell you, Lancey Ives, if I were not a woman of more than human resistance, I should have been burned to a crisp by the thoughts which have come—this day alone! . . . Hear the steps in the hall; see the lanterns groping about the gardens! Del Pinar is roaring at his hounds to bring in the quarry—and my power in the palace is gone with my father's—but they shall not have your life—my playmate of Oporto——"

"But they shall not make you suffer through me!" said I.

"Suffer!" she said scornfully. "They cannot make me suffer—save by prolonging the war. Pindoro would not have formidably resisted America. That is the work of my blood. Every rifle-shot has bruised my spirit. And to-night—the moaning wounded, the uncovered dead; the terror of the sentries; Velasquez dungeoned, perhaps dead; the mothers in America, brown mothers here; you, Lancey Ives, consumed with fever and threatened with a shameful death—but there is a way for you! . . . Ah, let me talk—I have been stifled so long!"

Clumsily I begged her to tell me what she would.

"To-night I prayed in this room that the power to wage war might be taken from my father. Almost instantly it was done! God

knows, I did not pray for his death. Could it be—tell me—was this the only way? . . . There were many things I could not understand about Serafin Roma—until you told me the history of Velasquez. . . . Can it be that others whom I made my friends for a day were sent suddenly away *on long missions*? . . . I pitied my father in his exile which I might have lifted. There was here a young Spanish nobleman—a pet of the Throne—who would have restored the Romas to false honors in Madrid—for me. . . . His pervert face haunts me yet; still, there would not have been this war, nor the shame of the treachery upon the Spanish soldiers, had I given—”

“Thank God, you did not!” I exclaimed.

“It seems years since I have talked like this! . . . Sh-sh-sh!”

The tread of infantry approaching along the moat was plainly audible. A new guard outfit was relieving the different posts in the palace grounds.

“Midnight,” Eulalie whispered.

“And high time for me to leave,” said I. “Why, the mere thought is too ugly to contemplate—the thought of your being even suspected of harboring me.”

“Lancey Ives,” she questioned quickly, bending toward me, “would you go out into the hall now and give yourself up?”

“Of course. I cannot stay here.”

“But why did you come?”

“It was really a blind instinct—just a gamble for time to think. The time has brought nothing. I cannot scale the wall, pass the gate, or leave the city. My hope is that San Cristobal change hands.”

“What an incomprehensible being you are!” she whispered in a way that made me wish I might see her face. “Are there many Americans like you? I mean, do not Americans reckon at all upon aid or courage from a woman in time of peril? . . . Do you think I would let you leave this room to go to your death—even if there were not another chance? Would an American woman suffer that?”

“The adventure is unique in my experience, Eulalie.”

“Can you travel to-night?”

“So long as I have consciousness,” said I.

“Years ago,” she went on swiftly, “when the Pindoroans were threatening San Cristobal, my father showed me an underground passage. He meant to escape with me if the city were hopelessly invested. The entrance to the passage is under the bed in the next room, where my father lies. It is a secret trap. The tunnel runs under the palace and grounds, yonder to the monastery, and emerges into a crypt in one of the thick walls.”

“It’s a brave chance,” said I. “But to get into the next room? There are sentries in the hall.”

"With light, you would have seen a small connecting-door between this and my father's room—in your hiding-place. It has not been used for years. The dresser here and a high-backed desk in his chamber have concealed it. The Pindoroans know nothing of the tunnel passage; and I believe among the Spaniards, only my father knew—and the monks, who know all."

Eulalie's dress brushed my knees as she leaned forward to draw the curtain again. Then I heard her groping softly in the drawers of her writing-table. Presently further tablets, with water plentiful, were given me; then several small packages of matches which strike on the box, a pair of candles, and finally a pistol.

"This last, I trust, we may not need," she whispered. "You keep it, as I have no pocket."

"You mean to escape with me?" I demanded, rising.

"Yes," she said, and there was something furious in the zeal of her answer. "I have all but died in spirit here. The pathetic need of my father for me was all that held me here."

There was fresh fervor in my blood for a moment. . . . In the dark, in that sanctuary of hers, I refrained a little longer, but vowed that I should not be separated from her again without telling the truth. . . . "But your affairs?" I suggested.

"A man's thought! My affairs are not in Pindoro, Lancey Ives. My father's fortune—may God give it back to the Pindoroans, from whom it was wrung!"

All that I dreamed she could be, was this woman of riper humanity. Ill, trembling, but ardent, I stood by the window, cold to the weird lure of the adventure, so one-pointed was my struggle to fight the fogs from my brain and to preserve upstanding my listless limbs. In the glow of a match she regarded me.

"How ill you are!" she said.

"And you—how brave and beautiful!" I answered huskily.

The flame was flicked away, but I had seen the sad lustrous face in the jet cloud of her mantilla—and a swift transition. . . . The connecting-door behind the dresser opened toward her. I stepped forward to help, but she pushed away my hand. The writing-desk with the high back creaked dismally as she put her weight against it. The way was now open, but she brushed back to my side, shivering.

"You go in first," she whispered brokenly. "I have always been so frightened near the dead!"

Every moment, every breath, endeared her to me. . . . The dresser was drawn back into place, the connecting door shut, and the desk of damnable creaking returned to its wall. We were now in the chamber with the dead Dictator—our retreat checked and complicated.

"Please see that the curtains are closely drawn," she ordered

tremulously. "Then, won't you—stand between me and the bed? I can bear anything but that! . . . Now the light!"

Her hand groped for mine and directed it, until I struck the match. We were standing before a great stationary case of Spanish encyclopedias, which I had but carelessly noted from the General's bedside earlier.

"A secret compartment is back of the books, between volumes nine and sixteen," she added. "It contains the wheel by which the trap under the bed is unlocked and let down."

The five big volumes were placed softly on the floor; and as I snuffed one match, and was igniting another from the spark, she touched the hidden spring. A small sliding-door, thrust aside, disclosed an iron wheel about eight inches in diameter.

"Now," she gasped, "look under the bed to be sure that nothing is in the way. The trap is in the very centre. Ugh, hurry! I'm to turn this wheel to the right as far as it will go."

I lit my way to the bed, my eyes fascinated by the yellow profile of the dead. My head swam as I dropped to my knees. For an instant, the feel of the match-box went out of my fingers, and I seemed to fall through endless blackness. A furious struggle for light must have transpired in my subconscious faculties, for the arteries of my neck and temples were pounding with blood as I caught my reason again. Eulalie was whispering my name excitedly across the room.

"It's all right," said I. "My head stumbled for a minute—that was all."

There was a click and a muffled rumbling under the tiles of the floor as she turned the wheel; and presently a rectangle of tiling, roughly two by three feet, so perfectly fitted that I had been unable to detect its outline, sank slowly from the surface of the floor. The woman continued to turn the wheel while one match endured and another was hot against my finger-tips. The rectangle of tiles had now sunk to more than three feet. In a final flicker of light I breathed the cool dank air of the passage and perceived a narrow descent of steps, to which the sunken section of floor was a sort of landing. I confess that it was with a shudder of horror that, as crawling backward, my shoulder brushed the bulging springs upon which the Dictator lay. A moment later I was at the woman's side with the word that all was ready. Further light I furnished while she carefully resealed the compartment and placed the books back in order. The tension of these last seconds, with hope ascendant, is not for me to express. She caught my arm with a swift movement as the last book poised on the shelf.

"Have you a pencil?" she whispered with an involuntary catch of breath, as a child after weeping.

"Yes."

She removed the book again, tore a heavy blank sheet from the front of the volume, relieved me of the match-box, and said as she made light:

"Del Pinar knows my handwriting, and he knows yours, too, from the stolen paper! But print—print in English—a few words for me. I have a thought that it will save lives!"

I count it a finer kind of courage than most men possess, in that Eulalie Roma remembered the natives her father had wronged; that she prolonged the agony of suspense to serve them through a clever bit of strategy. . . . As I had but one good arm, it was necessary to go to the table for a surface, but first the book was properly replaced so that no clue to the compartment of the wheel was left. In a further two or three match-flares, I hastily indited the following in English at her dictation:

COMMANDER, PINDOBOANS:

We could have used Serafin Roma alive, but leave him for you since we find him dead. Presently word will be sent to you to surrender. By acting promptly, you will spare your force as well as the palace from destruction. By order, AMERICAN COMMANDER

Eulalie took the sheet, folded it once with the printing out, and bade me place it upon the face of her father. Plainly I saw how it would affect Pinar, already nervous. He would believe his army, even the servants of the palace, rotten with treachery to the core. . . . I stood at the bedside until her hand, trembling with dread, found mine.

"Don't light a match now," she faltered.

"This is a game of hide-and-seek. We'll laugh at it in years to come," I whispered.

Dropping before her, I felt for the rectangle with my toe, slipped to the tile landing, and guided her with my hand. . . . Then she stood beside me in the narrow shaft, sobbing, shuddering, shrinking from the weight above. Three steps descended to the floor of the passage, and on the wall was a wheel similar to the one in the compartment behind the books. Before setting it in motion, it occurred to me to dust the tiles, and the edge of the orifice above, lest the outline of the trap be betrayed. With the first whirl of the wheel, the machinery growled and started to lift. The section of the floor was within six inches of place, when I heard a quick step in the hall, and simultaneously the woman gripped my arm. Then a key slipped into the lock of the Dictator's door, and the darkness turned red to my eyes.

I was conscious now of a deadly, murderous rebellion against the interruption, conscious of the woman's fingers sunk into my sling-arm; and, too, of an abnormal acuteness of hearing.

Some one entered the room above, struck a match, caught sight of
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the paper on the face of the corpse, and vented a quick, nervous oath. The voice was Del Pinar's. In his instant's hesitation, I felt the last of my strength burning out. He stepped forward with a throaty cough, snatched the paper, and scurried out, like a child from a dark room, slamming the door behind him. For ten seconds, he halted in the light of the hall—then rushed away.

"He's gone to find some one to translate. Turn for your life!" Eulalie commanded, entirely without necessity, for the machinery was grinding ere her first word. Presently the great bolts slid into place, and the wheel stopped with a jerk, and all was silence. I should have fallen but for the woman's arms. For a long time I seemed to hear some one pleading with me—low, swiftly, imparting a passion of vitality in her words. At last I felt her sustaining arms, and her warm breath upon my cheek.

"For God's sake, forgive me!" I whimpered, and clutched at my nerve again.

XI.

Of that journey through the passage to the monastery crypt, I remember but little. With the click of the bolts locking the tiled trap into place, a certain balance of power left me which I could not summon back, in spite of the stirring needs of the occasion and the supreme effort of my will. Many times since, I have wondered to what extent certain other men would have resisted the enervation of fever under circumstances exactly parallel. To me, this judgment, though unverifiable, is sufficient: Colonel Standart, in such distress, would never have suffered the woman's arms to sustain him, nor the pilot-burner of his brain to flicker out; and that red roarer, Donovan, would have carried my weights (and the lady, too,) until such time as he could drop with them in full dignity.

I remember the splendid woman holding the candle high in her left hand, and leading, with the other, a stumbling wreck. I remember, not her words at all, but the sweet intoning voice which healed and cooled and soothed. Sometimes I imagine I hear it still, as a man in rare moments dreams himself back into the serenity of innocence, wherein in the touch of a mother's hand is magic and omnipotence, I remember, too, the green mold upon the stones; and the keen zest with which I drank in the smell of clay. There is some deep significance in this, I am sure. It was sweet to me—an inborn familiarity—like a wind that brings to an exile a breath of his own country. Thus Mother Earth calls the weary home. Literally, I thirsted, as for water, to lie unclothed and drink with every fevered pore the coolness of the clay.

Long and long, until I thought I was dead and committed to some

interminable tread, the candle and the voice lured me on. At last we came to a place where the erosion had weakened the walls of the passage and several big blocks had fallen to the floor.

"We'll sit down and rest here," she said. "It's still long until light, and I would n't dare to hunt for the trail down into the valley until dawn—the descent is so steep."

There was a troubling matter in my mind, but it was a moment before I could organize the words: "Are we not liable to encounter outposts of your father's—of the Defenders—when we emerge from the monastery wall?"

"I have not heard that the line of defense extends back of the palace grounds," she answered. "The country is wild beyond the monastery, and the descent to the valley is almost sheer from its walls. We have far to go; that is, we must make a big circle northward in crossing the valley, so that we may surely avoid the Defenders. My only fear is that your strength may not last. We'll sit down here for a little while and rest."

She held the candle low upon the stones, chose a place, and made room for me. "You have plenty of matches," she observed, clearing her throat. "I think we had better save the candle—in case anything should happen—don't you?"

"Yes," said I, and we were in the dark.

I heard her breathing, heard the tiny watch at her breast, its movement racing like the heart of a little frightened bird; then, at long intervals, water gathered into the toppling weight of a drop, and fell to the floor. The spirit of me cleaved with love to her—but my lips fumbled.

"If you should sleep an hour," she ventured, as if with great effort, "do you think—there would be any trouble in rousing you?"

"Yes. It is cool here. I am resting. It is all I need."

She vented a quick breath of gladness. "You are brave. I know you are fighting—ah, stronger than sleep. I am so dependent—if I should find that I could n't rouse you, I'd go screaming through the passage. When I *feel locked in* and alone in the dark, I smother. It is horrible to suffocate—"

"No," I resumed stubbornly; "I have no particular desire to sleep whatsoever. But talk—yes, that's quite the thing."

"Do you know what this makes me think of?" she said lightly, rising instantly to the need of the moment, and making me respond to every sentence.

"The babes in the woods—do you remember?"

"They wandered away on a bright summer's day, and got lost in the woods——" She halted for me to finish.

"So I've heard people say."

"Yes," she exclaimed, with a laugh; "that's it exactly. And, 'They sobbed and they sighed, and they bitterly cried, and the pore 'ittle fings'—oh, I have n't thought of it for years and years!'"

"They layed down and died?" I finished dully.

"It was n't sung to me so—let me think! . . . 'And the pore 'ittle fings'—oh, yes—'fell asleep side by side.'"

"They must n't," said I.

So we chattered on, but the words—hers and mine—would roll and roll together, indistinguishable to me, until I jerked up the bars again. And once I felt myself falling gently, softly, back into my sanctuary in the palace. It was all dark, but I knew by the fragrance. . . . Eulalie did not move her shoulder, but the little time-piece raced at me, and a big drop started me up, as it never would have done in my sanctuary. I believe I informed the lady that moment very definitely and soberly that, by any means:

"They must n't."

At best there was a long time unaccounted for in consciousness. Eulalie declares that she did not fall asleep, but acknowledges that she suddenly found herself shivering in the dark, actually chilled from the damp, stony place. Certainly, when the candle was relit and brought to bear upon the little watch, it was three forty-five. On and on, we penetrated the tunnel, until the first candle was but half a thimble's length and held in her hand with the aid of a hair-pin. Indeed, it was softening into a shapeless button when the passage began to narrow and ascend.

"Thank the good God!" she panted. "We are now in the monastery wall. I was beginning to suffocate with the thought that there was no end."

The passage contracted to the width of a coffin before the end was reached, and the second candle showed us an iron door set in the masonry. The lock was a heavy notched block of steel, projecting from the door. It was readily lifted by hand from within, and fell with its own weight clutching a cross-bar when the door was closed from without. There may have been a way to gain the passage from outside, but the secret was not ours. . . . Eulalie was before me, holding the candle. She lifted the lock and pushed. The door did not move. It seemed that instant as if there was an iron hand upon my throat, and the woman sank back against the stones, her face like death in the candle-light.

There was nothing holding from within. I sprang crazily at the iron, bracing myself against the opposite wall. Inch by inch, Eulalie panting praises in my ear, I forced the door to give away—against Nature's own barrier of vines and thickets outside. . . . I do not remember the words, but fragrance comes to me with a dream—that

we clung together in each other's arms while the warm stirring air of morning flooded in.

The jungle had grown to the very door of the passageway, but we squeezed through. The sky was thick with the dawning, mixing and clouding like milk in the black. Through the tangle northward, and skirting the masonry, we made our way to the turn in the monastery wall.

"The trail of the monks is somewhere ahead, but we must n't pass their gate," she whispered. "Nobody but those of the order comes here."

We sat down at the edge of the steep descent and waited for the night to flee from the valley. I remember—the marvel of it—that I heard her heart and the little watch together, her face against my hair, and we two were as one soul. . . . The lingering shadows below thinned and were spirited away. . . . Clutching roots and vines, through densities which held the terrific heat of yesterday, deeply sinking into moist mosses and fungi—for ages, it seemed to me, our descent continued, until the day was blinding azure above the foliage, and my body swayed downward behind the intrepid woman, with its own weight. . . . Suddenly excited voices ahead and one loud challenge:

"Halt!"

The woman turned to me with the sob of failure. The failure was throttling me. In the madness of the moment, I drew the pistol—an act which the jungle mercifully hid from the eyes ahead—but Eulalie clutched my arm. A moment later we were surrounded and I was battling for her life, when a huge red hand (in which I felt limp as a rag doll) gripped and lifted me. . . .

I awoke, an unknown time afterward, but it was in the dark, and my cot was very comfortable. I stirred and sighed. There was a quick rustle of skirts, fragrance, a hand upon my forehead. It was all dreamy, Elysian. . . . Fragrance, a touch upon my forehead again; and this time—not a touch of the hand. . . . It was as if some power—as if levers of life were turned on full, and I was drawing from nature dynamics the pure substance of strength. Brain and limb, I was renewed—but I dared not speak. . . .

Again I awoke—uncounted hours afterward—and I was alone. My hand was a discovery, indeed. I followed it with my eyes up to the shoulder, to be sure it was mine. A brown stick, it looked, upon the white coverlet—a brown stick, claw-headed—which told the story of a journey to the gates. A thought or two began to burn, and all seemed good, but I wanted the darkness and that touch not of the hand again. . . .

Later—it may have been the same day—it occurred to me to explore

the surroundings. A piano was shoved deep into one corner. The floor was tiled, the ceiling lofty, the room vast, and outside were gardens and a wall. All this pleased and interested me, long before I realized for true that I was in the music-room of the palace. I now felt a sense of proprietorship, and lost no time locating the door to my sanctuary. Next I felt the need of society and called. . . . It was the door of my—sanctuary which so swiftly opened.

"Oh, you blessed hero!" the lady whispered. She was fresh as a dawn bud, and the fragrance was mystic with past adventures and fragments of memory. I stared and stared. Eulalie bore it bravely, for she must have known that my heart was bursting under her eyes.

"Eulalie," I said, but a wheel-chair was being trundled through the hall, and just now bumped in. It was Colonel Standart, badly but certainly not hopelessly shot up. He had been wounded in both battles. I asked if he were in the saddle on the day I had watched from the lines of the Defense. He had been, but was sure he did not cross the Espiritu Santo trail in the afternoon, at least, so as to be visible from where I stood. So that point was never settled. I believe I sighted him in delirium. Velasquez (the nobleman rests in peace if fine memories of the living soothe the spirits of the dead) was found lifeless in the last cell to the right when the Americans entered San Cristobal. The force which Eulalie and I encountered in the dawn under the monastery cliffs was American—a flanking party of Donovan's—instead of the left wing of the Pindoroans, as I had feared. His was the huge red hand which lifted me. The capital had changed hands six or seven hours after Miss Roma and I emerged from the passage. The lady confided to Donovan concerning the notice she had left upon the face of her father; the red roarer in turn had related this point, and something of the character of Del Pinar as Eulalie had outlined it, to Standart, who immediately ordered a surrender. In the momentary wait, a demonstration by Donovan to show how successfully he had flanked the city was an added pressure brought to bear. Del Pinar was already whipped by his own fears—and gave up the city and the army. All this three weeks before. . . . As for me, I was informed that blood-poisoning and fever had brought me down, and perfect care and a good constitution back among living men. There had only been a flicker of vitality to spare. As it was, forty-odd pounds had been left along the trails of the dark. . . . Standart ordered his man to wheel him out, and grinned at me in an appreciative, commanding way—until the door was closed. Then imperiously I was bade to sleep and talk no more.

Twilight was falling in the gardens when I awoke again, and the brassy terror was sliding down the west. Eulalie was sitting beside me fanning, and her wondrous eyes were full of dreams.

Then I told her that ever back in the years of separation I had caught from time to time a fleeting glimpse of her great glorious eyes—in the lit-streets of strange cities; in theatre-darks and harbor distances; and that always she had been to me the ineffable woman.

“It is true, then,” she whispered, “that you have loved me since—Oporto?”

“Yes, and I think in my soul I have loved you for æons—aye, æons! . . . Did I tell you in delirium, Eulalie?”

“Yes, and that night in the passageway. Beside, I had this——”

From her breast, she drew the paper I had written and which had been stolen by the servants of the palace.

“It was under my father’s pillow—at the last! . . . But tell me again. It is sweet to hear. . . . Oh, I waited so long, Lancey Ives! . . . And that day in Hong Kong—I was afraid!”

The American trumpeters sounded “retreat.” The darkening mountains were cut keen against the red majesty of the west, and Pindoro was enchanted. . . . As in that wonderful moment of fragrance, so now, brave Eulalie bends.



A MAIDEN

BY SARA TEASDALE

O H, if I were the velvet rose
Upon the red rose vine,
I’d climb to touch his window
And make his casement fine.

And if I were the little bird
That twitters on the tree,
All day I’d sing my love for him
Till he should harken me.

But since I am a maiden
I go with downcast eyes,
And he will never hear the songs
That he has turned to sighs.

And since I am a maiden
My love will never know
That I could kiss him with a mouth
More red than roses blow.

IN DEFENSE OF SPRING

By Edwin L. Sabin

THE least respected poet is the spring poet, for it seems to be the fashion, in these modern days, to carp at spring. The spring poem must be a satire, or else is to be regarded as merely a licensed effusion. The very disposition to revel in spring and appreciate its charms is dubbed, lightly, "spring fever." People journey to California and to Florida, a thousand and two thousand miles, to avoid spring. The attributes popularly assigned to spring are house-cleaning, mud, colds, and hopes deferred. Where is that spring whose beauties are manifold? Spring—

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie.

Now, let us give much-maligned spring its due. You know, as I know, that sweet springs exist. They have existed, they do exist, and probably will keep on existing, for nature, spring, and youth are eternal.

The truly spring will be found to follow, legitimately, after a rollicking winter, and about the time when in the cellar bin or barrel we grope for the last apples and eat those previously rejected.

The snow upon the roof, accumulated there again after that false February thaw, under a beaming sun melts in hurry-up fashion, so that the water streams from the overflowing eaves, and even all night—or at least for the five minutes until we fall asleep in our cosy gable room—we hear the pleasant drip. But in the morning they are icicles as long as spears, which about ten o'clock come crashing down. It is fun to hasten that downfall by smashing them with snowballs.

Final snowball battles may be waged, to and from school, for now good "packing" is supreme. But skating is slush, and coasting is on the ragged edge.

The fire in the hard-coal argand stove, which has gone out only once all winter (and that, of course, on the coldest night), is "rattled down" by Father as infrequently as possible; just enough to keep it alive. The adjustment is delicate and difficult.

A fly is seen, feebly sunning itself upon the window-sill. This event eclipses the coming of the early blue-bird. Hen Schmidt, next

door, discovers a wasp, out and waggling its wings tentatively. Mother thinks that she heard a robin. A pair of blue-birds actually do arrive, and begin restoration of their last year's nest in the gable eaves of the barn.

The cat is shedding, with generosity impartial, her hair. So is Sport the dog. So is Prince the horse. The curry-comb is clogged every morning, and hair floats in the atmosphere of the stall.

You likewise would shed. The winter woollen underwear sticks and "itches" and suffocates the hide beneath; but you are forbidden to shed much until in May. That is the mother-appointed time for boy-shedding.

The house will shed first. It is shedding outside, on its roof; and it soon will shed inside, throughout the rooms. Mother and Maggie-the-Girl eye carpets with strong disfavor, eager to take them up and hang them out and have the hair—that is, the dust from winter feet and winter stove—removed.

Now with chilled and grimy knuckles, and damp knees, and bulging, chinkety pockets, may one join with others in marbles—"Boston" and "Big Boston," lagging, and such technicalities. To play "keeps" is denied you, by Mother and because you are a Baptist. Once you do play "keeps," covertly—and lose your big crockery and your prize bony; which is plainly a visitation and restores you firmly upon the straight and narrow road of Baptistry and rectitude.

A few peg-tops appear. Then, on a sudden, dozens.

Little girls bring to teacher violets, plucked in the woods.

A toad, torpid still, and half frozen, is found in a sunny corner of the yard. That is a sure sign, and a token to herald afar. The truly spring is exciting.

Evenings are longer, with a twilight after supper in which one may play at "Sheep-in-the-Pen," Indian, and other running, energetic concoctions resurrected, like the fly, the wasp, and the toad, from last fall. By day as by evening the air summons to rejoice; so that recesses at school, and the mornings and noons, are rife with tag, pom-pom-pullaway, prisoner's base, and the kind. Even the little girls organize and race and scream.

The maples certainly are budding. So are your feet. They are craving to burst their sheaths. The copper-toed boots, their copper worn thin and shiny, or else missing altogether, their leather red from soakings, and much patched from coastings and skatings and scuffings, may be discarded, and shoes substituted. What a singular lightness! A kid can run twice as fast now, and wants to. But better is to come.

The streets are flowing with water, rushing down either side, and tempting the wayfarer. Hen Schmidt has rubber boots, and plashes gloriously. He wears them to school. But his father is rich,

or better than your father. You wade, and when you do you lose your overshoes. Little girls are continually losing theirs. Rubbers and overshoes are of small account, except to placate mothers; for the water comes in over their tops.

Fights are numerous. The shrill slogan: "Fight! Fight!" rings perpetual. Everybody swells and struts and jostles, courting a challenge.

Snoopic Mitchell, the free-lance, goes barefoot: the first. You don't see why you can't go barefoot, if all the kids are. But you can't. Mothers are mighty mean sometimes. If she (your mother) only would see Snoopic frisking and kicking, and how he was n't hurt a bit!

The fire in the hard-coal stove is out! Father hopes that he won't have to rekindle it.

The banking of sawdust or of leaves around the foundation of the house can be removed, and you are the one to do it—you and the wheelbarrow; on Saturday, of course. The pungent odor of bonfires is in the air, as people clean up their yards. You must rake your yard after school and on Saturday. Why can't you stay out of school to do such things?

The house having shed thoroughly outside, sheds, at last, inside. From one end of the town to the other resounds the lusty thumps of broom-handle against carpets on the line. Mother chooses the important day—and after school or on Saturday morning you beat carpets. Spring may be sweet, as the truly spring is, but it is busy. However, as the copy-books say, "to labor is sweet." Out of the opened doors and windows, mingling with the in-drifting odor of the bonfires, floats the odor of soap-and-water, as Maggie scrubs floors and casements and stairs.

Cherry-trees are in bloom. Hen Schmidt also blooms, with a boil, and his mother is giving him sulphur and molasses. The boil is on the back of his neck, under a flannel bandage—red flannel, as a danger signal. And every time a kid touches him he snarls: "Ouch! Look out, darn you! You'll hit my boil."

Dandy rains descend; dandy to be out in, and for making of lakes and canals, and useful in inviting forth the angle-worms. In the shade behind the barn the frost still lingers at the surface, but in sunny spots the garden-fork may be thrust into the earth almost a foot. Mother wants her flower-beds digged. But it is better to dig for worms. Perch are running and bull-heads are ripe.

There are lots of robins and blue-birds, and an oriole is about. Little girls bring in to teacher bunches of pink flowers they pluck in the woods. Snoopic Mitchell fetches home, through town, a big string of perch and bull-heads—much more significant. He caught

them while you and Hen had to work. But you have a can of worms collected, ready.

Yellow-jacket hornets are building a nest in the woodshed, just over the door. They must be ousted. Father does it.

The stoves are taken down, and the parlor and dining-room look empty. The hard-coal stove was taken down and out when the house was cleaned, but the wood-stove was left up a little, for safety—everybody lifting sturdily when the carpet was replaced under its zinc.

Your feet burst out, at last. They must do it; the law of nature, in the call of spring, is too strong. Mother gives reluctant "yes." Ah, *now* what lightness, what buoyancy, what racy exultation! You may fly, you scarcely touch the sidewalk. And ah, how delicious to wriggle toes in the soft, cool mud and squirt it up between!

The clogging, suffocating, swaddling winter woollens are peeled, and you know the bliss of medium-weights, smelling freshly of camphor. With feet and body thus freed, you cannot contain yourself; and, ruffling about, you get a bloody nose from another kid, at school. You *almost* lick him, only he is bigger than you.

It thunder-storms. Grandpa Davis hobbles down-town and predicts no more frost. Mother is planting her flower-beds.

The windows at school remain open all the day. The red-headed woodpeckers drum tantalizingly upon the steeple of the Baptist church. Snoopie Mitchell reports that he has gone in swimming; says the water is warm and bully.

Yes, spring, as enchanting as poets ever pictured, has all arrived, and the world is to be congratulated.

That is what I know about spring, as spring really is. I have not dwelt upon quinine, grip, nasty rains, nipping cold snaps, obnoxious mud and wet. These are canards; the more I think about them, the less I recall them. Reviewing, I am convinced that spring—sweet spring—is entitled to be pronounced the best season of the year; but then, so, in turn, may be pronounced summer, and fall, and winter.



THROUGH THE WINDOW

By Will Irwin

Author of "The Confessions of a Con Man," etc.

JULIA, the nurse said to the few visitors who inquired, was "struggling back to life." Julia herself, had she tried to formulate it, would hardly have called it that. It was no struggle; it was rather a growth. She had swung close to a certain nadir. At one time life had sunk so low that it was a choice with her—it had lain within her will—whether she should stay or go. She was to remember long afterward that she had made this decision lightly, as a thing of little difference. The horror of death, with its appurtenances of the grave and mould and decay—that had not entered into the calculation. Never again, in fact, was death to appear to her mind in that aspect. While she had sunk low, she had also risen to another plane of consciousness, wherein she knew how little, after all, the flesh mattered.

These reflections were not for now. If she had any emotion, any reflection, it was wonder—wonder when she gathered strength to lift what hand she had left, that it was she lying there, the content of so many little, tiny nerves and red blood-courses—wonder and a kind of contentment which was neither happiness nor misery.

It might have been morning, it might have been afternoon—at any rate, the sun was shining and the little night lamp was out—when she was aware of a voice. At first it flashed upon her that this was one of those voices, dim, dull, uncertain, which she had heard in the days when the springs of life were very low, when she had been making the decision. Not with dread, but with a certain weariness, she wondered if this were indeed the decision come to be made over again; if she had to bestir herself to know whether she was to live on, or whether she was to let everything go and rest.

But this voice, she perceived after a time, rang as though there were something behind it. It differed from those other voices. They had nothing at all behind them. And the speaker—she perceived this when she had straightened herself out a little and gained the ability to think—was saying things different in substance from the vague chatter of those other voices.

"Hello, little invalid!" said the Voice.

Languidly, Julia tried to turn her head. She did succeed in turning her eyes. As far as her range of vision went, she could see nothing. The nurse, she remembered, had gone out a long time ago—or was it just now? At any rate, the nurse was gone. She made an effort to form her mouth for words, as a child sets his feet before taking one of his first, halting steps, and managed at last to speak in kind.

"Hello!" she said.

The Voice was speaking on.

"I'm across that little child-size passage in the next flat house. My window looks pretty nearly into yours. I can't see you, because your bed is back-on to the window, but I know you're an invalid, and somehow I know you're small; so I say, 'Hello, little invalid!'"

Julia struggled to remember certain things which the nurse had said. She must obey orders. She wanted to obey them, but somehow it was pleasant to hear that cheery male voice with the ring to it, with the attack and resonance of life. So she made the effort again; it seemed to her, when she was done, that she had delivered an oration of an hour.

"I am not allowed to talk," she said; then, after a pause: "Are you there? I like to hear *you* talk."

The Voice came louder and stronger.

"Oh, yes, I am here. I've been—watching—you know, all this month. I don't know what you want me to talk about, but if you do want talk, there is where I live. First I'll tell you what I know about you. You have been sick for five weeks, and very sick, but you are better now. The doctor comes only every other day. Once he used to come every day; and one day—the time you went through the crisis—he came twice. I know that it is pneumonia, because I've had pneumonia myself, and I know the signs. I remember just how long it is before they let you talk, and I've waited until to-day.

"Now, don't you say a word. I'm doing the talking. Here I am, a young man—I'll say myself over like an advertisement for live stock—five feet eight inches tall, weight about a hundred and sixty, thirty years old, of a kind and docile disposition, and a liking for little sick girls. I've been a sick man myself—pneumonia does things to Californians. When you get better, so that you can talk, I'm going to trade symptoms with you.

"This is chapter one. Chapter two will come in the next talk, because you can't stand yet to hear the story of my life. It is too exciting. And the nurse will be back in a minute. I can always tell when she is entering, because she makes your door creak. Don't be afraid; I shall watch. Of course I am presuming that you want me to talk to you for another instalment. If you do, please say 'yes' and we'll stop for to-day."

To Julia's reduced mind, it came that the decision she was about to make was as momentous as the old decision whether she was to go or to stay. It seemed, indeed, of more moment. But she gathered together the figments and fragments of the life which was creeping in, and answered, after fixing her mouth again:

"Yes."

"Good-by for to-day, then, mysterious invalid." She heard the closing of a window.

Meditating on these things, digesting them, Julia fell asleep.

When she woke, it was night. She knew because the little lamp was burning, and Miss Tallant, that old, seasoned trained nurse who worked like a machine of low horse-power, was dozing in her chair at the foot of the bed. With Julia's motion, Miss Tallant roused herself; there followed the almost insupportable business of drinking from a tiny glass, of holding a bulb syringe under her tongue. When the nurse had settled herself back in the chair again, Julia turned her head, arranged her mouth, and asked a question:

"Who lives across the window?" Julia waited a long time for the answer. It did not come. The nurse never even lifted her eyes at the question. Julia, with as much disappointment as her weakness left her power to feel, perceived it all. She was saying things without saying them, just as she had done away back in her nadir. Her vocal cords, it seemed, set themselves in the right form, her mind said the words over, and her voice ran through her throat; but some connection was lacking; some string uniting the dynamic power and the machinery of speech was untied. So, while she thought at first that she was speaking, there was no sound in it, and no one paid any attention. The voice across the window—she had made the owner of that voice hear. Why, she wondered? Why . . . Julia slept again.

Now it was day—without pain but also without sleep. It brought weary routine of annoying business with the doctor and bothersome things to drink. Less weary than all the yesterdays since she touched her nadir, it was also more sufferable because she was waiting for something. Each time that the nurse left, she felt in herself a shadow of expectation stronger than any emotion she had thought ever to feel again.

Now the nurse had gone, and expectation was fulfilled.

"Are you awake?"

"Yes." She could make sound of speech!

"It is six o'clock. I suspect that the nurse has gone to get her dinner, and I'm just in from—from my work. That is, I call it work. May I talk to you again? You have only to answer 'yes.'"

"Yes—please."

"Now, don't you waste strength on etiquette, though I don't know

any word I'd sooner have you waste breath on than that 'please.' First chapter from the thrilling story of my life. I'm a mining engineer from Nevada and California. That is, I call myself a mining engineer. I'll let you into my secret. I'm a bluff. I'm really only a miner, selling mines in New York. In the West, you know, we say that when a man has tried everything else and failed, he goes to selling mines. But it is a little better than that. I really have a mine, and I've faith in it—found it myself. It's a low grade ore, and I need capital to develop it. The details of selling mines in New York won't interest you, I'm afraid; but maybe I can interest you by telling how I came to find it.

"I was very blue and discouraged last year when I started out on my last prospecting trip. I was grubstaked. You're an Eastern woman from your voice, so you won't know what grubstakes mean. The other man buys your burro—that's a small and especially virtuous kind of hiking and hunting and losing my beans and coffee. I had only half your claim.

"Well, any way, it was up to me. I must strike something that fall or go back to the shovel or the yardstick. The rest is three weeks of hiking and hunting and losing my beans and coffee. I had only three more days to go, and I'd camped away up high where there was a little fall of new snow on the ground.

"I was discouraged, and I was mad. I guess the burro caught it, because she behaved fearfully. I have it on my conscience that I beat her, though I'm usually kind—even to burros. I left her to rustle for herself while I cooked the last of the bacon.

"When I turned back to tie her for the night, I found she'd been in a bad temper, too. She'd been pawing in the snow, as a burro or a horse always paws to relieve his feelings. It's the horse way of swearing. After I'd nearly jerked the neck off her to make her behave, I happened to look down and notice where she pawed. Gold quartz—trust a miner to know an outcropping! If any one will build a smelter up there to work it, we have a mountain of ore. So I'm grubstaked again—prospecting Wall Street, which is a blame sight colder than the Nevada mountains.

"But that won't interest you. You'll want to know what became of Magda, the burro. That's the sad part of what I'm going to relate—good-by." For the door had creaked to proclaim the entrance of Miss Tallant, the nurse. Julia saw her pass through her range of vision, heard her step over to the window, caught this said under her breath:

"They make too much noise over there."

Julia fell asleep hugging her secret.

Now she was counting days and distinguishing time, and wondering

what had become of Magda, the burro. The poor little soft-nosed donkey that had a tragedy in her life! It was late afternoon, with the early street lights making shadows and reflections on her wall. The nurse had gone to the kitchen for her dinner.

"Awake?"

"Yes."

"In two or three days I'm going to let you talk. We were on the burro. Perhaps I should n't tell tragedies to any one coming out of pneumonia, but I'm on the subject. Well, you see, Magda——"

"That's a play," said Julia.

"Sure! But don't you talk. I named her after the play because she talked just like an actress I heard in it once. I guess I Jonahed her. Well, I felt grateful to Magda. She'd always had a hard life, feeding on sage-brush and cactus and thistles. I doubted if she'd ever in her life known the taste of a square meal. And you'll agree that a lot, a whole lot, was coming to her. All the way back, I pulled bunch grass for her. And when we came into town, I saw the man who had grubstaked me and I arranged to fix Magda proper. I put her in a box stall. I had her fed on hay and oats and bran mash. It was too much for her. She died quite suddenly."

Julia could feel the tears starting. Had she thought she should ever weep again? But when he spoke once more, she found her unaccustomed muscles drawing themselves into a smile.

"I must say I have a record. I'm the only man, except those I invited to the spectacle, who ever saw a dead burro. We don't believe in the West that they die at all. They're such angels, the way they stand for everything and never complain, except by way of digging up mines for a fellow, that they're translated in clouds of glory, I think."

Julia, with the wisdom of the resurrected, knew that people and burros and all who have enjoyed the rapture and pain of being alive do not die; neither are they translated. It is just a change, much more glorious than any translation in trailing clouds of glory, but a change which one forgets when she is past the stage of the new resurrection. She herself would forget it; already she was beginning to forget. She must try to keep on remembering, so that she could tell the Voice.

Then he changed from Magda and her tragedy to pleasant things. He told of automobiles that streak across the desert, even Death Valley itself; of the Swede who owned the only spring on the edge of the valley and who came out, when your throat had become like old leather, and sold you a bottle of cooled beer for a dollar.

"And of all the dollars you spend in this here trot through life, you miss this one least," he said. Of his house he was going to build in Pasadena or Mill Valley—he had n't decided which—when the company was formed and he had got rich; of starlit night above the High Sierra,

where everything is very cold and white and clean; of camps in the desert with a hair rope about your bed, because a rattlesnake cannot cross hair.

And the door creaked and the nurse came.

Now, Julia found that her mouth could always be depended upon to make sounds when she tried to speak. The doctor said that she was doing very, very nicely. With this rerudescence of interest and strength, she took to listening for sounds from that dwelling across the screened window; she could hear something moving now and then; it seemed to her that she could distinguish two pairs of heavy, masculine feet. The day when she took to these observations, she was dimly disappointed to find that no voice spoke through the window, even when the nurse was out. But the faith of the new-resurrected was in her. She knew that it would come again.

The next night her faith was fulfilled.

"I gave you a rest," he said after he had made sure that she was awake and listening, "because to-night I'm going to let you say twelve words. I'm to ask questions, and you're to answer. Now, the first—one word—will be your name. Mine is Frank, and you may call me by it, if you wish, as soon as you can afford breath. When we are sick, we are just little boys and girls again. So please let it be your first name. That wouldn't be etiquette with a coarse, Western stranger if you were well, but at present it's all right and proper. Now, playmate, name please."

"Julia."

"Eleven words left. What do you do for a living? Wait! I'll tell you what I know. You work at something, but you can afford a little flat of your own and you don't live with your people. You may teach, though from the little conversation I've had you don't sound to me like a teacher. Still, you're no plain salesgirl or stenographer, because you can afford a flat of your own. If you think I'm impudent to want to know about you, just say 'no,' but if you want to answer, one to three words will do. This is like cabling at five dollars a syllable."

Julia considered the question and the answer, which loomed to her momentous.

"Head cloak saleswoman," she brought out at last.

"Eight words left. I am rather glad you are n't a teacher; that does n't seem to me like *doing* anything, somehow. Now, to proceed. Have you any parents?"

"Mother." Then, thinking of the ingratitude he might impute to her, she added:

"Lives with married sister, Chicago."

"That shows how much breath people waste in this world. Here I

know all about you, or all that has stirred up my heavy curiosity, and you 've got two words left to spend as you want."

Julia needed three words. It seemed that she could not get along with any fewer. With the feeling that he was waiting intently over there, she pondered this. The suspense, and her inability to condense further, inspired her to take chances with the unlucky thirteen.

"Was Magda brown?" she asked.

No more had she said this than she felt how funny, how childishly funny, the question must be to him. But if he laughed, she should never like him so well again. She would n't like him not to laugh, either. The thing for him to do, if he were to live up to her ideal of him, was to be amused and to control it. She was bathed in relief when she heard a change in his voice as though he had, in fact, conquered laughter. And he said:

"No, gray, with an especially pettable white nose. Now you 've said more than enough—I 'll have to subtract one word from your allowance to-morrow—and I won't take any more risks to-day with that nurse. She sounds like a tough old veteran with gray hair." He stopped suddenly on this, his tone changed, and "Good night," he said.

Always something to wonder about! If he could see the head of the bed, why could n't he perceive that Miss Tallant, the nurse, had not gray hair, but faded red?

Nevertheless, she felt very much better. Listening to the voice was a stimulant, from which there was no reaction.

It came to be that the nurse stayed a very long time at her dinner, having announced that she might go out for a few minutes after she finished; and the Voice talked for an hour. He allowed her five whole sentences this time. He let her tell him that she had been four years in New York and had worked up from a salesgirl, that she was little and blonde, that she had caught pneumonia by taking too many chances with a late summer day which had turned out cold and raw; that she would n't let them take her to the hospital because she wanted to be sick right among her own things.

"That's a splendid recommendation for you," he said. She wanted to ask him what he meant, but she had already used up her five sentences. On his part, he spun more yarns of the mines and the plains and the mountains; all illuminated by his pleasant voice and his unexpected turns of expression. She was growing by now to perceive things; and she formulated to herself a certain strange quality in his voice. Under the cheery tone was a sadness—not sadness exactly, either, but rather a dullness. Otherwise, it was a voice which one might know anywhere. Long afterwards, she was to put into concrete thought her perception of an undeveloped stutter, a hesitating burr on the beginning of a sentence.

So it went on, through days in which Julia ceased to drift back to life and began really to struggle—her will was in it. The nurse began to let her talk; the Voice, following, permitted her, in their dinner-time conversations, to speak whole sentences, paragraphs, pages. They knew enough about each other, it seemed; for now they had come to another stage of friendly intimacy and were talking, not facts and stories, but opinions and likings and ideals. He liked the same things she did, it appeared; further, he seemed often to understand her tastes before she spoke.

There came the time when Miss Tallant showed her the cards and messages of those who called from the store in the low period. Also, Miss Tallant let her have flowers—a great cluster of pink roses from the girls in her department. In two or three days she might have company; in a week, if she were good and obeyed orders, she might sit up.

She told all this to the Voice.

"See my flowers!" she added. "I had the nurse put them on the bureau so that you *might* see."

"So that I *might*—yes, it was good of you!" Why did he speak so low?

"But can you see them?" persisted Julia. "I tried to plan, but I can't just remember where your window comes."

"Oh, sure! You placed them all right." His tone was indifferent. A swift pique came over Julia. He was not taking interest!

"I don't believe you do. You are only trying to humor me. What color are they?"

"Well, I can see them, you know, but the light is very uncertain here—the glow is in the window and everything looks red. They appear—reddish."

Julia laughed a little.

"That's a man's word for pink—reddish!" But she was not wholly satisfied.

Another dinner-time talk, and, "I am to have visitors to-morrow," she announced.

He paused a little time before he said:

"That's bully!"

"Well?" thought Julia. But he made no move in the direction toward which she was pointing.

"I suppose some of your friends from the store will come," he said instead.

"I suppose so."

"Fine, after a long sickness,—to see people again!"

Julia pondered. It was certainly bold—but she was an invalid—and she did n't care.

"It's only a step from your apartment to mine."

"Ah, why did you say that?" asked the Voice.

"Just because!" responded Julia, and fell back on her pique. Some time elapsed before the Voice spoke.

"I have n't told you this, but now I must. I'm going away. I've known for some time, and I was getting ready to tell you to-day. I've —well, I have n't sold the mine, but things make it necessary for me to return to Nevada.

"Julia, little invalid," he went on, his voice catching, "let's have this for a fairy tale. I'm just an elf or a goblin or one of those things we used to read about when we were children. If I came to see you, I'd see you only once, and I should n't seem half so fine to you as I've been, just spinning yarns through the window. You're going to stay in New York, and I'm coming back—after a while. Then there'll be time for you to—get used to me. You see, I'm not what you call an attractive man. I'm homely, and hiking out after mining prospects has n't refined or handsomed me any. Shan't we leave it now for a fairy tale?"

Julia, an unexpected warmth in her cheeks, found breath to answer:

"Yes, if that's what you want."

"Then good-by for now, little invalid. The fairy tale is over. The real world for you." And then, as the door squeaked to the coming of the nurse, a final

"Good-by!"

Miss Tallant said next day that Julia was n't doing nearly so well. She must not fret so; if she did, she should n't have any company. As it was, Miss Tallant (the doctor concurring) postponed that event for two days.

But health and mending went along, as they do in spite of will when the tide of life really begins to run. That decision between going and staying lay with her no more. So in a week the blood was flowing, strength was back; they were moving her into a chair, teaching her to walk on feet which seemed rounded at the soles. On the first day out of bed, she looked over to the window across the narrow area. The curtains were drawn; yet she fancied that some one was moving inside. The new tenant, probably. Still, it all seemed very strange!

She was walking out now in the fine Indian summer weather; at length, on a specially warm day, she was permitted an excursion to the park, two blocks away. As she sat on a bench, watching the morning panorama, a little color came back into her cheeks and her heart. She found herself chatting with Miss Tallant, making comments on the children, the nurses, the waiting cabmen, the bench loafers.

"A blind man," said Miss Tallant suddenly.

Julia looked up, interested. He was approaching, that blind man,

led by an attendant. His was a case where pity grows from contrast. He was young, well-formed, strong of limb. His shoulders should have been straight; one felt the incongruity of their half pathetic stoop. His keen hawk face, with its broad, humorous mouth, had scarcely one of the lines graven by patience in action, which belong to blind faces.

A moment Julia studied him; and then, over mind and soul, came a weakness which had nothing to do with the weakness in her wasted body. It was like that weakness of soul in which she lay when she made the decision; and, as in that other weakness, she saw things not perceived of the senses. It came to her as a certainty.

This was the Voice through the window!

So much the soul of Julia told her before proof came to her mind. He had drawn opposite to her now; and he was speaking to his attendant.

"Manson," said he, "if this is a popular corner of this park, you had better drop me here. I like to know they're about, if I can't see them." It was the Voice; no need of her soul to tell her that. The same dead undertone, now so pathetically comprehensible; the same little half-stutter as he started his sentence.

Manson seated his charge on the next bench.

Julia rose, so suddenly that Miss Tallant put out a hand to stop her. She rose with a new strength in all her body, and crossed over and sat down beside him and—

"Ah, I've found you!" she said. Over his face ran a current of expression—joy first and then a droop of all the lines in his face, so that it needed not his blue glasses nor his stick to prove that he was blind.

"I'd been afraid you would!" he answered.

Miss Tallant had the perceptions of her craft.

"I'll be back in a minute—I want to go over to the drug-store—keep yourself wrapped up," she said.

"We'll excuse you for a half an hour, Manson," chimed in the blind man.

Alone now, she took his hand.

"Dear, brave friend!"

"I don't know if this is a sign—your finding me in spite of myself. Ah, little invalid, do you mind if I lied?"

"It must have been a good lie, because you told it—but why did you think it necessary to lie to me?" She stopped, afraid of the answer, the only answer that her saying could call for. It came as she expected.

"Because what I felt was n't square. I am blind. Perhaps I must always be blind. I did n't lie so much—it was true about the mine."

I went blind afterward—too much snow. Manson told me of the sick girl across the passage—and at first I was just trying to amuse you. Dear girl, might I ask something?"

"Of course."

"When no one is looking, may I put my hand on your face for a minute?"

"Yes. Now!"

"It is a beautiful face. Ah, I am weak. You don't know what I want to say."

"Say it, Frank."

"Ah, no."

"Listen. You called me back. I should n't have gone on living. I should have sunk again. Do I not owe you that?"

"Owe me what?"

"My life, Frank."

"Dear love!"

"Dear love!"

LOOSE ME, APRIL

BY HILTON R. GREER

LOOSE me, April, set me free,
Soul and step, to comrade thee!
Bid yon maple's quivering fire
Touch the ash of old desire
Into leaping flame again,
Coursing through each stinging vein!

Loose me, April! I would speed
Blithely where thy footsteps lead:
Chase the butterflies that pass,
Golden shuttles through the grass:
Race the ripples as they run,
Lithe brown Arabs in the sun:
Clamber where the dogwoods blow,
Twinkling galaxies of snow:
Or, all breathless, unaware,
Pierce the moss-hung boudoir, where
Beauty, by a ferny pool,
Braids her tresses, dusky-cool.

THE AVOIDED VISIT OF CAROLYN

By Maude Zella Herrick

“**H**ORRORS, Cousin Harriet!” exclaimed Nerissa, as she laid a note between the gingerbread and the cherries on the luncheon table. “If Carolyn insists on coming to visit me now, I’ll have a ghastly time of it—getting ready for my wedding and all! When she goes home I’ll feel like breaking the engagement and handing Stewart over to her.”

“Oh, she may be different now, and it’s only four months till your wedding,” soothed the elderly maiden cousin with whom the girl was then making her home.

“Yes, if Carolyn does n’t decide to marry him herself in *three*.”

“I thought you said Carolyn would be married this fall to that Brant Mathews who is down in Mexico;” and Cousin Harriet pressed a cup of chocolate upon her ward.

“Oh, yes, but you know she has been engaged before. And though I know that Stewart is really *mine*,—when a beauty and a coquette like Carolyn goes flourishing her charms too diligently under a man’s nose, and monopolizing him as completely as she can, it makes you uncomfortable. She’s so used to petrifying the men with her attractiveness that she’s forgotten the distinction between engaged men and unengaged ones. Not that she’s really wicked or designing; but she simply appropriates Stew whenever she can. I’ve generally stepped aside and let her—it seemed the only way to show that I was n’t jealous—but the further aside you step, the further she pushes you.”

Cousin Harriet was too busily engaged with a slice of cream-cake to make any comment.

“I dread to think of going through all that agony again. Carolyn has always liked Stewart, and she has tried this same thing more than once. And you know how courteous Stew is, and how nice and polite, always, to everybody,—so that you don’t know how he’s really taking it!”

“Why don’t you write her not to come? Can’t you think up something in the way of a good reason?”

"Well"—reluctantly—"I've thought of a plan, but I don't know how it'll work. You know Gertrude Kittery is out at Plainsville, Nebraska. She keeps insisting that I shall go out to visit her. I have a notion to write and suggest that she write me, imperatively, to come to her at once, saying that she has been ill, and that her doctor's orders are to send for some good cheerful friend to divert her mind and help her get well."

Cousin Harriet rose from the table. "Write that letter at once," she said.

Four days later, Nerissa sat on the veranda, reading a letter postmarked Plainsville, and smiling blithely to herself.

The letter begged her with all fervor of eloquence to hasten to her friend's bedside. In a postscript it was even suggested that, to make everything complete and artistic, Nerissa should invite Carolyn also to come to Plainsville—this being the climax of irony, for the little town was notoriously small and uninviting and socially dead; and the dearth of masculine entertainment was such that Carolyn would be sure to avoid it as the plague.

In still a second postscript Gertrude had added:

My illness won't be hard for Carolyn to believe, for, you know, being married so young, and widowed so soon afterwards, the shock, and these four lonesome years, have had an effect upon my health. It's only within a couple of months that I've felt like going about at all. Father feels so encouraged over my improvement that he has gone to Hot Springs for his rheumatism. I could n't get him to leave me before—there being only the two of us, you know. So, you see, you will be doubly welcome.

Nerissa immediately wrote to Carolyn. Then she packed her wardrobe, and started that evening for Plainsville, leaving an explanatory note for her fiancé, who was out of town on business.

At Plainsville, the next evening, she received a note from Carolyn, stating that she would accept Gertrude's kind invitation, and would start at once. She *wanted* to be quiet, the note said, and being with two such dear friends would be enjoyment enough.

Gertrude received the news with the calmness of despair. Then, "Do you see what's before me?" she demanded. "I've got to go to bed and stay there, and have the doctor in every little while, and eat nothing but toast, and all this when I've just started to go about a bit, and when the only social festivities of the whole year in Plainsville are arranged to take place!"

"How I wish we had left off that final artistic touch!" groaned Nerissa.

"Oh, well, cheer up!" replied Gertrude. "I'm really not taking it to heart." Then she sank down upon the veranda couch and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Go 'phone for Doctor Dean," she said at last. "We'll have to make some sort of explanation to him before Carolyn gets here, and he can help us to decide on the nature of my malady. As it is n't generally known in Plainsville how ill I've been—seeing that I attended a luncheon yesterday and a picnic the day before—it may take some working of our wits to keep Carolyn from finding things out. If any of our callers say anything about my being at that picnic, just ignore it. If they continue to crowd it under our notice, or dwell on the suddenness of my attack, be ready to rush to the rescue and help me change the subject. Carolyn has no head for figures; the dates will probably escape her. And you know she's always interested in talking about herself. We can start her off at that, on dangerous occasions."

An hour later Doctor Dean called and was told that, owing to an unusual and peculiar complication, which lack of time precluded going into, Mrs. Kittery would have to feign illness and remain in bed upon the arrival of a guest who was expected soon. Doctor Dean inferred it was something in the nature of a practical joke which had miscarried. He smiled indulgently, asked no questions, and announced that he stood ready to help them all he could.

Carolyn arrived promptly on time.

"You don't look as bad as I expected," was her first remark, the greetings being over; and she gazed critically at the young widow, whose face, though pale, still retained a round, vivacious look.

"Yes," Gertrude replied; "Nerissa's being here has seemed to make a difference, has n't it, Nerissa?"

In spite of her desire merely to be quiet and enjoy the company of her two dear friends, Carolyn had not been in the house three hours when she began to inquire into the possibilities of amusement.

Just then the maid announced Doctor Dean.

He came in carrying his gloves and derby carelessly under his arm—a tall, tanned, gray-eyed young man.

His visit was brief and business-like. When the door had closed upon him, Carolyn, rocking leisurely beside a vine-shaded window of the sick-room, said at once, "Why, he's young and interesting-looking! Is he married?"

"No," said Gertrude.

"I thought you said there were no attractive or eligible men here."

"I still say it. Doctor Dean does n't count. He is what you call—well, not a woman-hater, but a woman-*avoider*."

Carolyn straightened up. "How interesting!" she commented.

"Doctor Dean is very reserved," said Gertrude slowly. "He is wrapped up in his professional career, you see. And he is very busy. Besides, he is making laboratory experiments, and writing a book about them. He doesn't allow anything to interfere, and never accepts invitations to social doings. Until lately, he has had heavy family responsibilities, and in that way got into the habit of not taking time for diversion and companionship. But he's very good to the poor, I've heard. Everybody has great respect for him."

Carolyn had lost the bored expression which, half an hour before, had seemed to settle upon her.

Now, as before stated, the only social activity of the year was in progress. Nerissa, as chief friend and consoler to Gertrude, was out of it. But Carolyn had no ties, and, three hours of quietness having sufficed for her, she attended whatever offered—which was little enough.

There proved to be no one at these functions who took Carolyn's eye, or who could at all compare in attractiveness with the disinterested Doctor Dean.

Carolyn never missed one of his visits. At the third, just before he closed his medicine-case, she rifled over to his side and asked quite prettily about one of its details.

His explanation was brief, but Carolyn bent down—a couple of locks of dark hair swaying bewitchingly against the soft rose of her cheeks—and examined the case carefully, seeming quite immoderately interested in his explanation.

As quickly as he could, however, Doctor Dean closed his case and hurried away.

At his next visit, when he had finished with his professional inquiries—he played his part faultlessly—Carolyn said in her most captivating way, as if to the room at large: "I've always thought I should like to be a physician or a nurse. It seems *such* a fine, unselfish profession. It always looked so interesting to make the daily rounds, and to take the long, pleasant country drives."

"They are n't as pleasant as you think," said Doctor Dean in a matter-of-fact tone, "owing to mud and rain and snow and cold. And they're entirely too long and too common."

"Yes, I suppose you *do* find them rather lonesome."

"Well, not so much that," he answered.

"I always enjoy hearing the unusual things that happen to people in such a profession," she went on glowingly. "I don't know *why* they should appeal to me so strongly, but they do."

The Doctor made no reply, merely busying himself with closing his medicine-case.

To the men of Carolyn's previous acquaintance, an opening like this had seldom failed of satisfactory response. Therefore she was not easily

intimidated. "I had a young physician friend back home," she amplified, "who used to take me with him on his drives, and I remember he recounted so many odd and interesting experiences. I found it *very* absorbing;" and she smiled guilelessly up at Doctor Dean.

He had no longer the refuge of his medicine-case, having closed it. "Oh, a doctor can't ever tell when he'll be back, you see, Miss—" (He had committed the unpardonable crime of forgetting her name.) "It really is too hard for a woman."

"Oh, do you think so?" said Carolyn sweetly, in the tone of one not agreeing in the least, but too polite to contradict.

She was now on her mettle. Many times before this she had turned a humiliating situation into overwhelming victory by sheer bravado, and she was no coward. "I was *almost* to the point of volunteering my services to you some day before I go home—when you were feeling particularly bored by the long drives. I imagined I was doing something quite unselfish in planning it, but of course if—" She paused and looked serenely up at him. Somebody would *have* to fill in the gap.

Doctor Dean looked perplexed and absent-minded. His thoughts had been full of something else.

Gertrude felt his confusion, together with revulsion for the snare laid for him. "You would n't *think* of suggesting that, Carolyn, if you knew how much it would discommode Doctor Dean," she began. (Gertrude had the consideration for others which Carolyn lacked.) "He would have to waste so much time attending to your comforts and convenience! *He*'s used to missing meals, and getting caught in storms, and not getting back till all hours, but with a woman along he'd feel he had to plan stops and delays at the farm-houses for your benefit. He has too much on his hands for that. It would mean neglect of his sick people."

Carolyn flushed—a strange experience for her.

Doctor Dean, ignoring the matter as insignificant anyhow, and now settled, gave one or two more directions, and bade them good-morning. A moment later Carolyn stepped out through a side door into the garden.

"Carolyn never came in contact with a widow before!" beamed Nerissa. "God bless widows!"

Two days later Carolyn made another attempt. It was hard to keep in a state of suppression when there was no one else of interest about.

She had evidently remembered what Gertrude had said about Doctor Dean's kindness to the poor; and Carolyn had always prided herself on her adaptability. As he drew on his gloves at the end of the brief daily visit, Carolyn, in a pretty, graceful manner, observed, "I've been

much interested in slumming the last two years. Have you ever done any of it, Doctor?—but I suppose of course you have."

"No, never. I should n't like it."

Carolyn paused, nonplussed. But she had evidently planned a point further, and she risked it anyhow. "Do you take any interest in Jacob Riis?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied.

Carolyn's face turned toward him, silently questioning further. Her friends often said she had a faculty of forcing unwilling people into conversation.

Doctor Dean, however, said nothing. He only turned a bit expectantly toward Mrs. Kittery. She had helped him in the previous encounter with this sociably-inclined young woman; perhaps she would again.

Gertrude saw the look and came to the rescue. "I think Doctor Dean will really turn out as a philanthropist," she said, gaily bridging his silence; "but he is so modest he would n't talk of it for anything. We have all decided he is very reserved and wary;" and she smiled at him.

He looked down at her in a quick, grateful way. Then, with a murmured word that Mrs. Kittery was rating him too highly and would find him out some day, he took up hat and gloves and was gone.

Carolyn, without remark, left the room and 'phoned a flaccid young bookkeeper that he might take her on the canoe ride with which he had been begging her to favor him.

Doctor Dean had suggested that Gertrude was now well enough—thanks to her cheerful companions—to sit in an invalid's chair on the veranda, if she felt like it. Gertrude at once felt like it.

On the next day but one, after pronouncing her much improved, he petrified all three of them by saying boldly, "To-morrow, Mrs. Kittery, I'm going to arrange to take you with me when I make a couple of short calls over on the Targate road. You need change; you're getting too pale."

"No, no, Doctor!" protested Gertrude, when she had recovered enough for speech. "I could n't let you! You are entirely too busy to go totting your patients around."

"It would n't delay me at all—this is a short trip. I'm not so rushed just now, and my first duty is to make sick people recover as fast as possible. You need a change, and if I'm along I'll know if it tires you too much." The coolly professional look in his eyes held just the hint of a smile. "I'll call for you at nine," he said and was off.

The drive went off very successfully, Gertrude being prettily flushed

and sweet, enveloped in a silky, trailing, soft blue cloak, and still worrying a little about inconveniencing the doctor.

To every one's surprise, on the afternoon of the following day Doctor Dean insisted on repeating the experiment. Gertrude's remonstrance this time was but a half-hearted one, which caused Carolyn to bestow upon her a look of suspicion.

That afternoon, when Gertrude reached home after her second drive, Nerissa sat excitedly rocking alone on the big veranda—Carolyn having just departed to the post-office. Gertrude dropped down upon the porch rug, and Nerissa began at once: "You know I told you, Gertrude, that Stewart had been gone from Hamilton on business ever since a day or two before I left. His letter this afternoon says he will be away for three weeks yet. I could have let Carolyn visit me in perfect comfort! Aunt Betty always said that Providence tempered the wind to the shorn sheep, and I think she was right. You don't have to stand any more than you can. And look at all the worry we've had, and all you've been through, you poor, dear lamb!"

"Oh, I don't mind that," broke in Gertrude, in such a blithe, happy tone that Nerissa turned and looked fixedly at her, whereupon a blush overspread Gertrude's cheeks.

"O—oh!" said Nerissa. "I've been a little bit stupid."

"No, you *have n't*," replied Gertrude decisively. "But this afternoon, as we came home, the Doctor asked if I would *n't* please go again to-morrow; that he knew it was pretty often, but he hoped I'd go; that he had *n't* realized before that the drives *were* lonesome. Finally it dawned upon me that it was *n't* entirely his goodness of heart prompting him. And he is *such* a nice man!"

The next afternoon, as Carolyn and Nerissa watched Gertrude and the Doctor drive off for the third time, Carolyn said, "You really are *n't* needed here any longer, Nerissa. Why not go home? And I'll go with you for a week. You know this is my last chance to make you even a short visit for a long, long time."

"That suits me exactly," Nerissa responded heartily. "But there's one thing I'd like to know, Carolyn: whatever induced you to accept an invitation to a sleepy little place like Plainsville?"

"Oh!" said Carolyn, with a yawn. "You know Eleanor Bates? Well, she had invited herself to visit me; and you know what a perfect little beast she is—how she tries so unceasingly to coquette with every one of my men friends. They simply can't escape her. And it gets on my nerves. You can't think what a selfish flirt she is, Nerissa! And she thinks she's a bird of paradise. I wrote her that I had accepted a previous invitation and would *n't* be at home; so I had to go somewhere."

"O—oh!" said Nerissa.

THE HEEL OF ACHILLES

By John Reed Scott

Author of "The Colonel of the Red Hussars," "Beatrix of Clare,"
"The Woman in Question," "The Impostor," etc.

THE President of the Consolidated Steel Company had spent the afternoon in going through the detailed statements of the Treasurer and General Sales-Agent, prepared for him at his special order. Now he flung them down impatiently. There was a scowl between his eyes, and his jaws were tight shut. The Company was going to smash—not to-day, nor next month maybe, but surely within the next quarter.

It was the old story of "spreading out"; the great open-hearth furnaces had done it. To be sure, the furnaces were really the Sinclair Steel Company, a corporation with a minimum of primary assets and a maximum of stock and bonds, but the stock was owned by the Consolidated, and the bonds (in amount, the millions estimated as the cost of the furnaces) were guaranteed by it, and were up, as collateral for the Sinclair's notes, with the official bank, at fifty per cent (and the usual rake-off for the Bank). The Consolidated, of course, had been paying the interest: the drain had been heavy for a year. Now Grinder could see default ahead; and he knew very well what would happen then. The Bank would instantly call the loans, sell the Sinclair's bonds, buy them in, foreclose on the mortgage, and purchase the furnaces for a song. Next, it would go after the Consolidated on the guarantee, a receivership would follow, the property and franchises would be sold under the hammer, and the stockholders be wiped out completely.

He took up the papers again and went to figuring; then hastily pushed them into a pile of correspondence as he heard the voice of the First Vice-President. Williams would find out the exact situation very shortly, of course, but it was not necessary for him to learn of it unduly early.

"Busy?" said Williams.

"Not especially," Grinder answered, leaning back and laying aside his pen.

Williams sat down. "Grinder," said he, "I've been thinking over the Sinclair situation, and I don't like it."

The President's heavy eyes surveyed him speculatively through their spectacles. Williams's department had nothing to do with the Sinclair matter—had he been nosing into the books, or was he speaking only from general knowledge?

"What don't you like?" he asked.

"It would take too long to itemize. Frankly, there is n't anything about it I like."

"Why?" the President demanded. "What has given you chills?"

Williams laughed. "No use trying to play me, Grinder. I can see what is coming; both the Sinclair and the Consolidated are headed for the maw of the Bank."

Grinder slowly lit a cigar. "Business is not promising, I admit," he remarked, "but I don't know that Smasher and the gang have got us just yet. We can hang on for another quarter, and things may take a turn."

Williams shook his head dubiously. "We have made a mess of it with the d—— furnaces," he said; "and you and I are to blame."

"The Bank is to blame."

"No, you and I. The majority of the directors followed us instead of Haylor; and we have led into the wilderness. Now, who is the Moses to lead out? Are you? I'm not. It does n't matter so much to you and me; we can recoup, we have plenty left to recoup with; but it's the women and the poor investors that I pity—those to whom the passing of a dividend means cessation of income, and a receivership, utter poverty. They are the ones I feel for; and I only wish we might tell every one of them to sell out to-morrow. Of course we must not—but I wish we could."

The President looked solemn and sanctimonious.

"No," said he, "no; of course we may not do that. It is a pity, but, of course, we may not do that."

"But what we can do," the other went on, very quietly, even smilingly—"what we can do, Grinder, is to stick to the ship—not sell a share of our stock. I've ten thousand shares of the preferred, and I'll have it next year."

"Yes," said Grinder; "that is what we can do—what we ought to do." He took the card the boy brought in. "I will see Mrs. Danridge in a few minutes. Don't go, Williams; it's nothing of importance."

But the Vice-President went. "I always give way to the ladies, and certainly to one as charming as Mrs. Danridge," he laughed. "Besides, I have an appointment."

Grinder rang for his secretary. "Show Mrs. Danridge in," he directed. . . . "My dear Caroline, this is a pleasant surprise!"—shaking hands and leading her to a chair.

"I hope I'm not disturbing you so very much, Henry," she said,

laying back her modest furs and looking at him a bit anxiously. She had known him for years—was his wife's most devoted friend, a constant guest at his table; was, indeed, as one of his family; and yet now the atmosphere that envelops a man in his office made him seem almost a stranger.

"You are not disturbing me in the least," he assured her. "I had about finished for the day. I've a little golf on with Wilkins at four, and I don't need to leave here for half an hour."

Mrs. Danridge smiled. "I'll not keep you; I'll let you go in a minute. Indeed, I could have waited until to-night—I'm dining with you—but this is business—my business, of course—and I thought that here was the place for it. I want your advice."

"It's yours, Caroline, such as it is, and for as many minutes as it needs."

She thanked him with a look, and went on, bending a bit over the desk, her fingers playing nervously with the pens and pencils on the pad.

"It's about an investment. You know how meagre my income is since Mr. Danridge died, and my son was killed in the Philippines; and you've heard me speak of the Downs case, and the chance for something really nice there, if we won, or could reach even a reasonable settlement. Well, we have settled, and yesterday I got my share, seventy-five thousand dollars—not much to you, Henry, but a lot to me. It means comfort and ease of mind for my old age, and puts away the vague fear of charity that has been on me so much of late. Now, what I want to know is where to invest it to be safe and to bring in as large an income as possible, consistent with safety. You can tell me, and I can trust you—that's why I'm here."

Grinder reached across and took Mrs. Danridge's hand.

"I'm delighted, my dear, delighted," he said; "and I'll help you all I can. But safe investments, paying large interest, are pretty hard to find in the general market. If you want absolute safety, I can advise only Government Bonds or down-town ground-rents."

"The income from them is very small, is n't it?" she objected.

He nodded. "But it's certain, and the principal is secure."

"Can't I get at least six per cent somewhere?"

"Not with assured safety."

"With reasonable safety?"

"Well, yes—by putting small amounts in mortgages on resident property. The objection to that, however, is that if the interest is defaulted you will have to take the property, and it may have depreciated and you be hung up with it or be compelled to sell it for less than the loan. And there is always the question of title. If it prove defective, you may lose the entire mortgage."

Mrs. Danridge sighed. Investments were not so easy as they seemed.

"Can't five per cent. be had on down-town business property?" she asked.

"Sometimes, not often; and there again the title question comes in."

"And I want more than five per cent. To me, the difference between it and six is just the difference between counting pennies and counting nickels; and I'm so tired counting pennies, Henry. . . . What stocks are sure to yield six per cent. and not drop off in price?"

"None!" Grinder laughed. "If there were such, they would be equivalent to U. S.'s and yield accordingly."

"I know I'm very ignorant, but don't the 'industrials' pay big dividends?"

"Yes."

"And regularly?"

"Many of them."

"The Consolidated has paid, has n't it?"

"Yes."

"And you have a large amount, even for you, invested in it, have n't you, Henry?"

"I have indeed!"

"Then why should n't I put at least fifty thousand in it? What does it pay?"

"Seven per cent. on par," Grinder answered, carefully avoiding the first question; "but, as it is selling now at eighty, the actual return would be almost nine."

Mrs. Danridge closed her eyes for mental arithmetic.

Grinder watched her with a covert smile.

"That would be forty-five hundred dollars, and still leave me twenty-five thousand of my capital to invest," she said. "Why should n't I do it?"

Again he side-stepped. "Yes," said he; "that would be the return, and you could put the balance into bonds at three-and-a-half or four."

"Would you advise me to go into Consolidated? Is n't it absolutely safe?"

"My dear Caroline, nothing that has to do with business is absolutely safe."

She smiled. "It's very modest of you, Henry, to refuse to recommend the Consolidated just because you are its President; but it seems to me, your best advice is what you yourself have done—where you put your money, I can safely put mine. Now, is n't that true?"

Grinder tried hard to meet the situation with the flush of modest embarrassment it needed; but his old monkey-face and yellow skin were not for blushes. The best he could do was to wave his hand deprecatingly.

"Naturally, Caroline, I won't advise you to risk your money in my Company, however safe I may regard it, or however much of my own I may have in it. It's a good Company, as Industrials go; but hard times *may* come, and the dividends may be affected. Now, of course, it is very alluring, with almost nine per cent. income on the investment, and—"

"And you and Mr. Williams at the head of it!" she broke in. "Oh, I'm sure it is perfectly secure. I'm going to do it. How many shares will fifty thousand buy at eighty?"

"Exactly six hundred and twenty-five. The brokerage will be twelve and a half cents a share, in addition."

"Will you buy it for me, if I give you the money?"

"No. It is n't well for the President to be dealing in his Company's stock; but you can purchase it through my brokers, Northrup & James, the same as I would have to do. I'll give you a note to them, and I'll also speak to Northrup on the 'phone."

He dashed off a line. She put the envelope in her muff and arose.

"Thank you so much, Henry," she said. "I knew I could trust you. I'll go down at once and give the order."

When she had gone Grinder drew over the telephone and gave a number which did not appear in the directory.

"Northrup," he said, when the well known voice responded, "a lady will be there in a few minutes with a note from me. She wants to buy six hundred and twenty-five Consolidated preferred at eighty or thereabouts, according to the market in the morning. 'Wash' the sale and short my account with it. I don't want to have any of my certificates transferred now. Of course she is not to know I sold the stock. Also, short ten thousand shares better than seventy-five; dribble it out slowly—take a week if need be; don't get the street suspicious. If you can, work it off above seventy-five. I may give you another ten thousand."

Grinder enjoyed his round of golf that afternoon; he was on his game—drove beautifully, the irons were just to his hand, and, on the green, he was always down in two, sometimes in one. At the end, he took seven balls from his opponent, and the drinks. As he sat on the side piazza, later, among a crowd of friends, a big motor-car came snorting over the hill and plunged down to the club-house, young Grinder at the wheel, a little, blonde-haired lady in a diaphanous frock and a blue veil beside him. Old Grinder waved his hand to his boy, and smiled with parental pride. Here was his single weakness—his absorbing affection for his son. He did not see the smile and wink that went around the circle; nor, if he had, would he have had the slightest notion of its meaning.

Young Grinder—called "Young" to distinguish him from his

father, whose name he bore—was tall and rather good-looking of body, but with a common, low-bred face, on which an expression of self-sufficient superiority had become grafted by years of habitual assumption. With every one of his sire's mean traits, he had, besides, an over-generous supply of his own, and he cultivated them assiduously. He had all the offensiveness of the snob-heir, who, never having made an honest dollar in his life, holds himself as of the purple of wealth and above the code of a gentleman. Among his circle he was a leader, because of his money and his arrogance; by the well-bred he was tolerated when he could not be avoided. As a youth, he had gone the pace, and was going still, strewing his way with violated sanitary and moral laws, smashed speed regulations and automobiles. He had married a rather nice girl of good family, in a small town, somewhere, and had lost no time in resuming his old habits, nor caring that she soon began to imitate. His favorite diversion was to dash up to a country club in a whirl of dust, order a drink as ostentatiously and as noisily as possible, and hurry away to another club to do likewise. At present, the particular occupation most in favor with him and his intimates was having a love affair with a friend's wife. Just now, his affair was with Mrs. Charing, the little lady who had come with him that afternoon. Where his own wife was he did not know, nor did he care—with another woman's husband, like enough; though not with Mrs. Charing's; so much he did know. Phil Charing had stroked his crew and right-tackled his team for three years in college, and his was a healthy mind and a decent soul. Besides, for six months he had been down in Mexico examining mines, and Grinder had made use of the opportunity to pursue his wife, and to lure her into his crowd, and then to dangle the golden bait before her pretty face.

Hence the smiles and the winks when the two drove up. Every one was wise but father. And the reason was father himself. Grinder might be a money pirate, his hand against every one, even a lone widow who broke bread at his own table; he might evade every statute law on the books, and do it with a laugh and a shrug; he might stand aside and let a friend, whom he could have saved, go smashing down in ruin, simply because, for him, there was no rake-off in the saving; but there was one law he never broke nor ever thought of breaking, and that his own son, whom he loved and trusted beyond anything on earth, should break it, and with a jest and a jeer, was not within Grinder's imagination.

Mrs. Danridge, having bought through Northrup & James the six hundred and twenty-five shares of Consolidated preferred, at eighty, had, in deference to Grinder's request, made no mention of it to any one, not even to Mrs. Grinder. She locked the certificate in a safe-deposit box, spent half a day and much of a night in contemplating the

pleasures of an increased income, and then suddenly went off to Europe, as the guest of a wealthy friend who wanted a two months' rest and, like herself, was a widow and alone in the world.

And while she was abroad the Consolidated shot down the financial toboggan. The day she landed, on her return, the Directors passed the dividend; within an hour the Bank called the Sinclair's loans and, on default, closed in on the furnaces.

When Mrs. Danridge opened her paper at breakfast the next morning, after a night on the cars, and read of it, and saw that the stock she had bought at 80 was now selling at 25, she had no further appetite for eggs and bacon. It was a stunned brain and a heavy heart that she carried to the Grinder mansion a little later. She did not understand it, any of it, except that her prospective income was gone and much of her actual capital. She had no idea what was meant by guaranteed bonds, depreciation in raw material, tightness of money, acceptability of collateral. She needed advice, and quickly—she wanted encouragement.

Mr. Grinder had gone down-town early, the servant informed her, but Mrs. Grinder was at home. With the intimacy of years, Mrs. Danridge went on toward the stairway. As she crossed the great hall, young Henry Grinder came hastily down, his hands filled with papers and letters. He paused a moment for a perfunctorily indifferent greeting, and then hurried out and into his car, which she had noticed before the entrance. Near the landing lay an opened envelope. Mrs. Danridge picked it up, glanced at the address, and turned to call the servant. He was gone, and the cough of the motor told her Grinder junior was off. She pushed the letter into her muff, gathered her gown with both hands, and went on and into the boudoir.

Mrs. Grinder, sweet-faced, younger than her husband, and well-born, was just finishing her coffee. She sprang up, and the two friends greeted each other in the suffocatingly demonstrative way of the women whose affection is genuine and whose lives have been much together.

But the one was quick to see that the other was troubled, and she frankly asked for her confidence.

Mrs. Danridge hesitated, mindful of Grinder's request for secrecy; then the need for unburdening prevailed.

"It's this awful Consolidated Steel affair!" she broke out. "I came back to-day, and find it has passed the dividend, and that everything seems to be wrong. I don't understand it, at all, and I want to consult Henry."

"But surely, Caroline," Mrs. Grinder exclaimed, "you don't have any of the stock?"

"Not any of the stock!" Mrs. Danridge echoed. "Not any! Almost everything I have in the world is in it—fifty thousand dollars—put there the day before I went abroad."

Mrs. Grinder raised her hands in compassion. "Why, oh, why, dear, did n't you consult Henry first? He would have stopped you, I know he would. And you dined with us the evening before! Why did n't you ask him then? It was that very evening he told me I must sell my stock at once. And he sold it the next morning."

Mrs. Danridge listened in dull, almost apathetic comprehension.

"I beg your pardon, Jane, but I fear I did n't quite understand about your stock—my head seems rather heavy this morning."

Mrs. Grinder went over and put an arm around her. "I only remarked, dear, how sorry I am that you did not consult Henry before you put your money into Consolidated. He would have saved you; he sold mine the very day you bought."

Mrs. Danridge did not answer immediately; then she laughed, a mirthless, vacant laugh, and arose.

"Yes, Henry could have saved me!" she said. "I think I shall go home now."

Down the walk to the street she went, slowly, dazedly. Presently she felt the letter in her muff, and drew it out; wondered vaguely how it came there, and mechanically opened it and read it. She read it again; stopped, frowned, thought a moment, then faced about and signalled a car.

With her hand on the letter, and with a very busy mind, she rode to the Safe Deposit Company, got her Consolidated Stock certificate, and hurried back to the big marble-and-mahogany-lined building where the Steel Company had its two floors of offices. But she did not ask for the President. Instead, she wrote a line to Mr. Williams in urgent request for an immediate interview. He came to her himself and led her in, and she launched at once into her story—telling of her visit to Grinder for advice, his shrewd way of leading her into buying Consolidated, her trip to Europe two days later, her return and talk this morning with Mrs. Grinder and what it had disclosed.

"Now," she ended, "I want you to procure me five minutes with him—he would decline to see me if I sent in my name."

"He has your fifty thousand; of course it was his shares you got—that is why he sent you to his own broker. Northrup simply 'washed the sale,' as we say. And now I know who was responsible for the heavy selling of Consolidated that week, and the heavy buying recently. He has cleaned up at least half a million on the short side. I think I can promise that he will be removed from the Presidency at the next meeting of the Board. It may be small revenge for you, Mrs. Danridge, but it's something; for I fear there is little chance to recover. Grinder never loosens up, and you have no case against him in law."

"I think I shall make a try at it, if you will manage to get me into his office," she said.

Williams laughed. "I'll do it with the utmost delight."

"But first, may I use your desk to copy a letter?"

He offered his stenographer; after a second's hesitation, she accepted, and the girl ran off the letter picked up on the Grinder stairs. Mrs. Danridge handed the original to Williams, with the request to keep it for her. He locked it in a small drawer in his safe and tendered her the key.

"Thank you," said she, refusing it. "Now I'm ready."

"Here is an old friend to see you, Grinder," said Williams, swinging back the door between the offices. "I venture to introduce her this way to avoid the watch-dogs." He bowed Mrs. Danridge in, and went out.

For just an instant, Grinder was disconcerted, then he came forward effusively.

"My dear Caroline! I'm delighted! I did n't know you were home again. When did you come?"

"This morning," she answered, dropping her muff for him to recover, and so avoiding his hand. "I landed yesterday and came out last night. What I saw in to-day's papers about Consolidated has brought me here immediately."

His sharp gray eyes searched her face, as he drew up a chair for her near his table.

"It is most distressing, most distressing!" he remarked. "It came on us like a thief in the night. I hardly yet know how nor whence."

"Nor *when*?" she asked, looking at him straight and hard.

His mouth laughed, though his eyes did not. "The 'when' is easy—we went to sleep in good times and awoke in a panic."

"And was that before or after I went abroad?"

He swung back in his chair and frowned. "After, of course, Caroline, after! You don't suppose I even apprehended it when I let you persuade yourself into buying Consolidated? I've regretted every hour since that I did n't make you be satisfied with a moderate income, and take your money myself, and put it into four per cent. bonds."

Mrs. Danridge rested both elbows on the desk and leaned across them.

"Are you quite sure you did not take my money?" she asked.

Grinder's frown was replaced by a stare of perplexed astonishment.

"I don't understand, Caroline, and I don't want to understand. You're overwrought and nervous, my dear, and very naturally, too; but I know you can't mean what you say. I'm sorry—"

She flung up her hand. "Don't!" she exclaimed. "Don't! Why are n't you man enough to admit it? Why be a liar as well as a knave?"

"Come, my dear Caroline, come!" he said, going around the desk toward her. "You're not well; let me take you home. I'm bound for the East End on a little business, and I'll drop you on the way."

She laughed sneeringly and waved him back.

"Go and sit down," she said curtly. "I'm neither crazy nor irresponsible. In fact, I'm quite well, and mentally unusually clear, as you are likely to realize before we have ended."

He regarded her in silence, hesitating just how to proceed. He wanted to get her out of the office without a noisy scene. Women who lose money in stocks always make a fuss; but it was not in his schedule to have the fuss here, with the chance of Williams or some other general-officer coming in, and the story becoming public. He had intended to call on her the moment she returned from Europe and have the lacrymosial show and its accompaniments then. He had not anticipated such a precipitate descent. Only yesterday evening a casual inquiry had elicited from Mrs. Grinder that her friend intended to remain in New York at least a week after landing. Remorse, and tears, and bewailing of his bad advice, and prayers to assist her, he had looked for and was ready to meet and go through with; but this present attitude was not, in the least, according to rule. It could not be that she knew the facts—she had been in town only a few hours; not long enough to ferret out anything, even if she knew how; and he was very sure she did not know how, nor ever would know. He had been acquainted with Caroline Danridge these many years, and this was not she; it was quite another woman, another individuality. And the change was due to what? He went back to his chair. After all, maybe it would be as well to have it out here, with the business atmosphere about him, and all the advantage of place and privacy.

"If you will promise to cut out the tears and hysterics, and to be calm," he said, "I'll be very glad to talk it over with you now."

"There will be neither tears nor hysterics," said she. "I'm here solely on business, and they don't run well with it. I have come to sell you my shares in the Consolidated Steel Company. Since you have ruined the Company, I don't care for them."

"My dear Caroline," said Grinder, "surely you can't hold me responsible for your purchase! You will remember that I told you there was nothing absolutely safe but Government Bonds and ground-rents, and that I strenuously advised against putting your money in Consolidated, or any stock which yielded or promised large returns. However, if you wish, I'll pay you the present market price for it—about twenty-five. That will save you the brokerage. I'm not keen for the stock now, of course, but I'll take it as a favor to you and to ease your mind."

"Yes, you'll take the stock, but it won't be as a favor to me nor

to ease my mind ; nor will it be at the present market price. You will pay me the par value of my shares, and do it now."

Grinder was puzzled. Was the woman crazy, or was she, in her desperation, trying to blackmail him ? His hand strayed toward the buttons on his desk ; and Mrs. Danridge saw and understood.

" Ring away ! " she said. " I 'm quite willing to have as many auditors as you wish. And again let me assure you I 'm not crazy nor demented nor a blackmailer. My business is very simple : you robbed me, deliberately and premeditatedly ; I 'm here to recover my property, with something added as compensation for the distress and the inconvenience you have inflicted upon me."

Grinder arose. " My dear Mrs. Danridge, there are limits even to the patience of a lifelong friend. I wish you good-morning."

She waved her hand toward the chair. " Sit down," she said. " Let us have no melodramatics. You don't understand the situation—there is rather more to it than you imagine. I 'm not so silly now as to fancy that you would voluntarily return your plunder, even though I did threaten to publish broadcast how you, knowing the Consolidated was going to smash, induced a ' lifelong friend '—a widow who sought you for advice as to investing the bulk of her small fortune—to buy Consolidated, and graciously sent her to your own broker, who sold her your own stock—oh, that surprises you, does it?—surprises you that I know it ! And that is not all I know—you, the President of the Company, then betrayed it by going short of the stock, buying it back this week, and making a profit out of your employers, the stockholders, of at least half a million dollars. Oh, you 're a pretty scoundrel ! And it would make nice reading down on the Avenue ; though doubtless many there would not hesitate to do likewise—and to hold on to the plunder, as you will do with the five hundred thousand, and would do with mine, too, if I had nothing but these facts to coerce you. But they are not all I have, Mr. Grinder. I have *this!*"—and she flung the copy of the letter before him.

Grinder had been swinging slowly back and forth on his chair, watching her with a sneering smile. Now he flipped open the sheet with indolent indifference, glanced at it, then tossed it aside.

" I fail to see why I should be interested in this type-written bit of disgustingly indecent amorousness," he remarked.

She nodded. " Very true—it is the original that will interest you ; it is *n't* typewritten, nor is the envelope ; and the envelope is addressed to your son."

" My son ! " Grinder exclaimed. " My son ! Impossible ! "

" Yes, your son—you seem to be about the only one who is unaware that he, these last few years, has been pursuing his friends' wives as ruthlessly as you have pursued their dollars—though, even then, I 'm

not so sure he is n't a little less contemptible than his father; he, at least, risks his life in the game; you don't risk even imprisonment."

And now the anger Grinder had been suppressing long burst into rage. He smashed his hairy fist down on his desk.

"Get out of the office!" he ordered. "Get out! And never let me see you in my house again! Get out!"

Mrs. Danridge arose. "Very well," said she, "I'll go—and send the original of this 'disgustingly indecent amorousness,' with its envelope, to the lady's husband; to Phil Charing—to *Phil Charing!*" she repeated significantly; "and then you can be prepared to hear of your precious son's demise the day that Charing returns; and I rather think he will make a record trip back from Mexico."

Grinder sat silent—amazed—horrified. Somehow, he knew that she was not bluffing, knew that she had such a letter, that she would do as she threatened. . . . His son! His son a rake; a profligate, an—— He deserved to be shot! He—— But his boy! After all, his boy—his only child! And Phil Charing! Of all men, Phil Charing! The quiet-mannered South Carolinian, courteous and gentle, modest and gallant—but who would kill on sight the man who had—— He threw up his hands. He was beaten.

"May I ask where you got the letter?" he said.

"I found it in your hall this morning. Your son had just gone through to his car."

Grinder took out his check-book. "You want sixty-two thousand five hundred dollars."

"No, I do not. I said that only as an extra twist to the screws. What I want is the exact amount you stole from me, with interest to date. Here is my calculation."

He glanced over it, drew a check for the total, and proffered it to her.

She shook her head. "I can't trust you. Having the letter, you would stop payment on the check. I must have cash."

For a moment he glared at her; then his heavy lips rolled up over his tusky teeth in the tiger's smile. He tore up the check and wrote another.

"Wait!" he said, and went out.

Mrs. Danridge gave a satisfied little sigh and crossed to the Vice-President's room.

"Will you please let me have the letter?" she said; then she laughed. "And really, Mr. Williams, I fear we were just a bit hard on poor Henry. He has gone, *himself*, for the *cash* to buy my stock at eighty and the interest."

Williams brought the letter and gave it to her with a low bow.

"Madam," said he, "I salute you!"

A HARVEST OF TARES

By Forbes Lindsay



NOTE.—Sir Patrick Manson, one of the world's great authorities on the transmission of disease by mosquitoes, recently declared in a public address: "My belief is that, if precautions are not taken in time, both of these diseases, yellow fever and malaria, will extend their range; that, with the opening up of the Panama Canal and by the repeated passage of rapid steamers across the Pacific, yellow fever will be introduced into Hawaii, Manila, and the Continent of Asia."

IT was finished. The greatest achievement in the history of the world stood to the credit of the American people. It was as perfect a piece of work as the mind of man could conceive or the hand of man execute. The massive dams, the monster white locks, the clear-cut channel, beautiful in their mathematical precision, lay ready to form a living link between the great oceans.

Thousands had come from all parts of the earth to witness the opening ceremony. War-ships of all navies, and at least a score of merchantmen, lay in Colon Harbor, waiting to pass through the Panama Canal on the day of its dedication to the traffic of the world.

Joy, hope, and expectation filled the air, untouched by a single blighting circumstance. True, a case of yellow fever had been discovered in the City of Panama a few days previous; but knowledge of the fact had been carefully suppressed, lest it should mar the occasion. The health authorities were accustomed to sporadic outbreaks, which they invariably extinguished without difficulty.

As the sunrise gun boomed out on the morning of January 1, 1915, the President of the United States dropped his hand on an electric knob, and the huge gates of the Gatun Lock swung open. The procession moved forward, headed by the latest vessel of the United States Navy—the great battleship *Neverfunk*. With bands playing, and bunting blowing in the breeze, followed one after another the representatives of the naval powers. Then came various merchant vessels, their crews manning the rigging and shouting themselves hoarse in their excitement. When the sun slid over the distant horizon, thirty-six keels had made the passage of the Panama Canal.

The next day, the *Pelham Castle* of London lay at La Boca, taking

on a few tons of cargo for Manila. Toward nightfall, as the last bales were coming over the side, a stowaway slipped quietly on board. Quickly she passed through the busy crowd of stevedores and deck-hands, and dived into the hold just before the last hatch was closed. Ere the anchor was weighed the stowaway had settled down on a gunny-covered package to sleep through the ten days' voyage.

In due course the *Pelham Castle* arrived in Manila Harbor, and a lighter came alongside to receive the cargo. With the removal of the hatches, the stowaway awoke and immediately left the hold. As in coming on board, she passed over the deck unnoticed, and dropped into the boat which was being laden. When the lighter entered the Pasig, the stowaway seized the first opportunity to escape to the shore. She was ferociously hungry, and ten thousand germs within her wriggled to be set free. She lit upon the first man she encountered and promptly buried her bill in his flesh. She sucked with the abandonment of starvation, and with languid delight felt her sides distending. The man was generally indifferent to mosquitoes, but this one was too intrusive to escape attention. He flung a hand to his neck, and the stowaway's travails were brought to an abrupt termination. But her mission had been accomplished.

The man's name was Dunga Pat. He was a lascar belonging to the liner *Amethyst*. That night he got unrestrainedly drunk and lay out upon the Luneta, where hundreds of mosquitoes battened on him without let or hindrance. The next morning Dunga Pat sailed with his ship for Hongkong. Two days out he had to take to his bunk. He died—the doctors disagreeing as to the cause at the quarantine station—but not before many mainland mosquitoes had derived nourishment from his blood.

The Manila mosquitoes which had feasted upon Dunga Pat may not have noticed anything unusual about their repast. Nevertheless, it was essentially different from anything that they or their kind in that part of the world had ever before experienced. These mosquitoes were stegomyia, the species which alone possesses the faculty of transmitting yellow fever. For the first time they were impregnated with the virus of that disease, which had never before visited the Orient.

The dread "yellow jack" swept the Philippines like a whirlwind. Few of the doctors had any knowledge of the proper methods of combating the scourge. The people were quite incapable of helping themselves and succumbed without a struggle. Through the crowded quarters of Intramuros and among the huddled huts of Binondo the plague stalked unchecked. Thousands died in Manila, and hundreds in every considerable town of the interior.

Hongkong had hardly heard with horror of the plight of the Archipelago when she found herself in the clutch of the fearful pes-

tilence. Dunga Pat had barely been laid in the ground when one of the quarantine surgeons was stricken. In quick succession, one, two, three, of the hospital attendants were seized with the same symptoms. In a few days cases developed in the city, and the numbers of the victims rapidly ran into the tens and hundreds. Vessels shunned the port. Business was paralyzed. Those who could fled into the interior, but scarcely faster than the scourge pursued. "Come over and help us!" the cry went out to the experts of the New World.

At Panama, Colonel Gorgas boarded the steamer which was carrying Sir Patrick Manson to the scene. They met in the smoking-room, and the Baronet projected the finger of derision at the American expert, crying:

"Ah, you mischief-makers! This is a pretty kettle of fish you've set a-boiling."

"I suppose we must plead guilty," replied Gorgas. "But I think that we can advance a plea of extenuating circumstances. You know we went a long way towards eradicating——"

"Why, there's the rub! Why the deuce did n't you go the distance, with the post in sight? Of course I'm not sending that to your personal address, Colonel—I know what you would have done if they'd let you. We're both in the comfortable position of being able to say, 'I told you so.' We warned 'em years ago to look out for this."

Colonel Gorgas puffed thoughtfully at his cigar, his feelings divided between joy at the prospect of a hard tussle with his old enemy, and bitter regret for the shattered picture of the might-have-been.

"But what's to be the outcome, Colonel?" asked the Baronet.

"The worst, I fear. We can't hope to fight it down. It has firm foothold in the Philippines and China, and has probably been carried to Japan and India by this time. You know the conditions in those countries better than I do, Sir Patrick."

"Ah, yes! Congested cities; crowded villages; a tank water supply; dense superstition; long distances; and the devil knows what not. Every condition adverse—worse luck. The thing will spread from Kasauli to Colombo in no time. As for China——" He broke off with an eloquent shrug of the shoulders.

"Lord! Lord! What bunglers we are at best! Such a splendid chance gone for all time. The thing can never be wiped out now." And the Colonel sighed at thought of his suddenly dissipated dream of a world freed forever from yellow fever. He had seen it within the bounds of calculable possibility. If his advice had been taken, the thing would surely have been an accomplished fact ere then.

"Cheer up, Colonel!" cried Sir Patrick. "Let's hope for the best. Steward!"

When the glasses had been filled, the malarial fever mosquito expert

clinked his against that of the yellow fever mosquito expert and exclaimed:

"Here's to the nation that blindly blunders into all sorts of scrapes and cheerfully flounders out of them. Here's to the nation whose monumental good luck and inexhaustible ingenuity never yet failed it in a tight place. I can't believe that it is going to be downed by a mosquito, Colonel."



TWO POEMS

BY JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY (April 23d)

TO-DAY was Shakespeare born!
Upon a day like this it must have been:
A golden morn,
Fields decked in vernal green;
The birds full-throated sound their glee,
And with one voice
Rejoice.
A wondrous glory rests upon the sea,
The whiles
The Heavens are all smiles,
And earth doth wear
A jocund air;
And all the world is glad and gay—
The Muse's greatest son was born to-day!

A WOODLAND EASTER

TIS Easter morn! A day of loveliness.
The earth, and sky above, are bright of mien.
Sweet Nature dons her fairest gala dress
And everywhere rare blossoms deck the scene.
The birds their Easter carols blithely sing.
A swelling chorus echoes through the dells,
And with her joyous message dawning Spring
The story of the Resurrection tells.
All things look upward to the Heavens high;
In offerings of praise each bears its part,
And deep within my woodland dwelling I
Find Easter chimes are ringing in my heart!

IT

By Nan Maury Lemmon

RICHARD DULANEY—stealing from the care of a drowsy tutor, dodging his closely watchful servants, slipping past his father's door, down the side lawn now and through the magnolias—came finally to the forbidden gate.

For one instant he paused and looked back. The park swept away to his left; before him the lawn ran smoothly down to meet a shallow lake; only here on the right-hand side stood a high brick wall, shutting out the small, dirty town, which he had never seen, and in this wall—the forbidden gate. A moment more, then, following the law written out for him by foregone generations, he unfastened the lock with the stolen key and went out.

He did not find the danger from which he had been guarded; he did not even know in what shape it might appear; still, he went back into the town the next night, and again the next, mingling with the people there, who were plain and quiet enough. Yet when his keepers found him it was too late.

They brought him to his father. Wessle, his body-servant; his tutor, who was also a watcher; and the under-gardener, lowered him to the divan with tender care. The slim figure of the boy lay limp among the cushions. His large, strange eyes shone from under a tangled mop of dark hair. His face was flushed, the delicate red lips partly open.

"E's all right, except for It, sir," Wessle urged anxiously.

"Ah, but it has happened at last!" wailed the housekeeper.

The financier looked down at his son very sadly. "'At last'?" he said. "This is but the beginning."

Suddenly the child raised himself on one elbow and stared joyously at a vacant space in the room.

"Here, here, Fifine! Come here!" he called out, snapping his fingers.

There was a hushed stillness in the room. At his son's words, the financier's expression changed to a look of singular perplexity; the nervous servants drew together as if fearing the presence of the supernatural.

But the boy did not see them. His face was dull and vacant now, and he lay before them breathing heavily.

II.

TEN years later old Dulaney's son, with his doctor, his servants, and his horses, returned to the home from which he had been absent since childhood. The place seemed vast and lonely enough after those years abroad, travelling from one European sanitarium to another, but he soon began to look on it as the centre of the universe; for there, one summer afternoon, at the very gates of his park, he met Her.

In Bertha Waltzinger he found a voice that stirred him—an unconsciousness of herself, an indifference mingled with elusive charm. She was unlike the other women he had known—his wealth did not attract her, his beautiful strange eyes did not move her, nor did the dim tales she had heard of a tragedy in his family excite her imagination. She saw in him at first only a stranger somewhat spoiled and selfish from constant attention, with an inconsistent sense of humor and a mind unsuited to her own. However, his magnetism quickly won her, and after a few weeks of hesitation she concealed her affection no longer.

Standing on her gallery the first night to say good-by, he asked eagerly if she would love him always. "Always," he persisted—"always, without change?"

"I don't know, Dick," the girl answered simply, for she was tired of his reiterations. "We do not rule time—it controls us. I cannot answer for change."

Bertha Waltzinger did not allow him to tell his father of the engagement, and she refused to accept his mother's jewels, which he wished to bring down to her. From the first day, she resisted the impulse to idolize him, criticised his faults, and made him wait on her—all of which was a new life to him.

One morning when they had ridden far into the woods the girl saw some purple berries that she wished for and made her companion dismount and wade across a creek to gather them. As she waited alone in the turn of the road, a servant in green livery galloped up, closely followed by the doctor.

"Where is he? Did he escape you?" the latter asked breathlessly. Then seeing his charge coming towards them through the thicket, he said a few awkward words of apology and withdrew. The young man mounted, and as they rode home together he talked from time to time along the way; but the girl was silent, for she knew now that they were continually followed.

"Suppose they lost you entirely," she questioned him the next night, "what dreadful thing could happen?"

"Why, they might find me again," the young fellow suggested, smiling.

As he stood beside her, the light from the doorway fell on his vivid coloring—the lips scarlet, the skin creamy as a magnolia.

For some days, she noticed, he had been growing more and more restless, and to-night he stayed only a few moments, then, avoiding the gate, he crossed the side lawn, vaulted a fence, and went down a back way towards the town. Lingering on the porch, the girl stood puzzled by his secrecy, until she raised her eyes and saw the explanation dimly outlined in the dark. At one side of the gate was the motionless figure of the doctor, while at the other end of the lane a servant stood—both waiting.

For many days afterwards Richard Dulaney did not come to the cottage, nor was there any explanation of his absence. The great house was silent; the servants hurried in and out; on the third day a tall, gray-faced man was driven to the door in an automobile and went hastily inside. A servant met him in the hall.

"It 'as 'appened again, Mr. Dulaney! We watched and followed hafter 'im, but it was n't any use."

"Oh, sir, he outwits us all!" wailed the housekeeper, hurrying down the stairs.

"Yes, he slipped away from us the other night," the Doctor put in abruptly, entering from the rear. "He has been drinking ever since, of course, so that is why I wired you to come down. Would you like to go in to see him, sir? He is quiet now."

As they entered the room, the boy, who had been lying still until that moment, raised himself excitedly and gazed over upon the floor.

"Here, here, Fifine!" he called out in a woman's voice, snapping his fingers. "See, she comes not!"

As he realized the meaning of the words, old Dulaney stopped and turned pale. He looked at the Doctor as if seeking an explanation, and the younger man seemed about to answer him. But though they remained standing together, neither spoke.

III.

RICHARD DULANEY, who for the past week had been spared all blame or even any mention of his escape and disobedience, was waiting for his accustomed reproof with the easy assurance of past victories.

"And now while we are alone," Dr. Ingersol began, "and I am so thankful that you are quite yourself again, I——"

"My dear fellow, I see no cause for gratitude in the fact," Richard broke in with a whimsical smile. "If there was the slightest chance of my being some one else, don't tell me you did n't seize the opportunity of changing me."

"I was going to say," the Doctor went on, with rough tenderness, "that you have got to stop this runaway business. It won't do! Do you understand me, old chap? Last week you escaped from me intentionally. I don't know how you did it, but you've got to stop. Now, it is very painful for me to have the servants watch you continually; it is a great hardship, and—"

"It is also quite an inconvenience to me," Richard drawled airily. "Suppose we abandon it."

"I don't want you to think I don't trust you," Ingwersol continued earnestly. "I do trust you——"

"Nevertheless, it might be wise to doubt me occasionally in spite of yourself."

"What an absurd turn you give to things, Dick!" Ingwersol exclaimed, laughing at last against his will. Then he began sternly: "But answer me this question once more—answer me seriously: Have you ever heard the name 'Fifine'?"

"Never."

"That will do. Now, hear the news I have for you. Miss Waltzinger is here. Your father asked her to visit us, and she came this morning with her aunt—to stay."

"How can I ever explain to her!" Richard exclaimed petulantly.

"Don't try to. I have done that myself. I told her it was a curse in your mother's family—they were all dissipated—and that you cannot free yourself from it. She understands, and she does not consider herself engaged to you—she wishes to decide about that later."

"When may I see her?"—eagerly.

"As soon as lunch is over," the Doctor said as he reached the door, "I will bring her in to you."

Outside, Bertha Waltzinger came slowly down the wide hall. Two days before, she had gladly accepted Mr. Dulaney's invitation to be his guest for a week. But now the broad grounds, hidden from the town outside, the numberless servants, and the splendor of this house shut away from the rest of the world, made the place seem like the haunted palace of some charmed prince. Although the girl was not fanciful, she felt some unexplainable mystery in her surroundings, and was relieved to look up and see the Doctor coming towards her.

"I don't know why it is," she began, with simple directness, "but, some way, I feel afraid here. It may be this tremendous house and the disaster in the family."

"Nonsense! That did not occur here," said Dr. Ingwersol, with his usual gruffness. "There is no reason to be nervous."

"Then I won't be. Are you——"

She stopped abruptly at the sight of a large oil painting which

hung in an alcove. A sweet-faced French girl, with smoky black hair and beautiful strange eyes, sat in the canvas; on her lap rested a clinging girl-baby of three years, while a little curly-headed poodle nestled in her skirts, looking out at the observer with alert, friendly intelligence. The light of the picture centred on the slim, nervous hands of the woman as she held the child.

"Ah, it is Richard's mother!" Miss Waltzinger breathed. "And is that the child—the one—*the* one?"

"Yes, and the dog, Fifine. She came home from a ball one night, and found them both dead and terribly mutilated. She lost her mind from the shock, and died soon afterward. There was never any clue."

"Does Richard remember anything about this?"

"No; he was only a year old at the time, so he could n't remember, of course. But there is a strange thing connected with it. He was in his cradle in the room when the tragedy occurred, and whenever he is unconscious he talks about it. I have known him to repeat whole sentences that must have been spoken there that night—and always in a woman's voice."

"But why? How? Tell me!" the girl cried breathlessly, nor was she quieted when the Doctor went into a careful description of Richard's actions on the night of his father's arrival.

"Oh, no, no!" she urged. "He *can't* do it! I can stand his drinking, but not *that*. It sounds almost supernatural!"

"It seems so, child; but it is nothing of the sort, I'm sure. For years I was at a loss for an explanation of it, but now I believe I have discovered the cause, and I am only waiting for some letters to see if I am right. But he is impatient to see you," Dr. Ingersol ended shortly. "Come—he is waiting."

"I—cannot. Before it is too late, let me go away. If I see him alone, I cannot decide for myself about marrying him. Alone with him, I am under his influence."

"Go in," said the Doctor in a tone of authority, and opened the door.

Hesitating a little, Bertha entered the room. Richard stood by the window; the easy grace of his tall figure and the delicate straight line of his chin showed clear against the light; then as he turned she saw the handsome face, his wonderful strange eyes, and the way the scarlet lips contrasted with the ivory of his skin, suggesting the colors of some poisonous flower. Once more under the spell of his magnetism, she drew near him. Standing, the young man looked down at her, all his carelessness gone in her presence; then as if he held this meeting too sacred to be shared with the outside world, before speaking he went over and shut the door.

For some time the intercourse between the two remained somewhat strained. Bertha did not permit a return to their former intimacy, keeping by her manner a slight barrier between them, but finally, as darkness fell, Richard came over to sit beside her, and at his approach she felt her command of the situation weaken. Knowing the danger of relaxing, she summoned all her self-control and for a while was able to assume a casual attitude toward him, but soon this too deserted her. He was talking, but she could not hear the words of persuasion—she was conscious only of the sound of his voice, that his hand lay close beside hers. Then, as the firelight flickered and grew dimmer throughout the room, a delicate, yet overpowering emotion came over her—she felt the thrill of his nearness, the sweetness of a half-imagined kiss. At this moment the door opened noisily, and her aunt, Mrs. Catcliffe, entered the room.

"It is useless to protest," the old lady observed to Richard, commencing the usual mock warfare between them. "I don't intend to leave my niece so much alone hereafter. No matter how busy I am, I——"

"If Mrs. Catfish," Dulaney broke in with a mischievous smile, turning to the girl, "will leave you to me, she will be entirely free for any engagements she may have to swim in the pond."

"Young man, you will please remember that my name is Catcliffe. Bertha, go up and dress for dinner. And you, sir, if you wish to argue this question, I——"

But Dick's mood had changed. He walked beside the girl to the foot of the stairs in silence. To her, it seemed as though he were depressed by the fear that if they separated, some unknown thing might come between them.

"Promise not to disappear if I let you go?" he begged. "Promise to see me alone, 'Miss Girl,' the instant we finish dinner?" And as she left, he remained standing motionless, following her with his eyes up the wide stairway until she was out of sight.

During the week that followed, Bertha realized that the moment was coming when she must give Richard a definite answer. The mystery about him remained undiscovered; it was ever present in her thoughts, and there seemed no possible solution of it except through belief in the supernatural. But after a few days spent alone with him, his magnetism had so gained upon her that in his presence even her horror of the unknown voice was forgotten; and as they rode together one afternoon, she had half determined to yield to his entreaty and postpone her decision no longer. Discerning this, Richard was in irrepressible spirits.

"My father is a very timid person," he remarked, as he glanced

back over his shoulder and saw that as usual they were followed.
“He rides in sight of us because he is afraid to ride alone.”

“What does he fear?” the girl questioned.

“I don’t know,” he answered thoughtfully, “but the woods are very thick and wild around here. It may be a fish.”

He continued to entertain her with inconsistent bits of nonsense all the way, and they were back within sight of the park gates before he turned for her answer—his face very white, but the tones of his voice almost under control.

“Have you decided, ‘Miss Girl’? Are you willing to belong to me now?”

Bertha Waltzinger was not impulsive, and she might still have hesitated; but as he spoke Richard leaned forward, and, for the first time since her arrival, bent down and kissed her hand. At his touch the girl’s reason deserted her; a sensation of exquisite sweetness ran through her veins, the thrill of a thousand violins seemed throbbing in her heart and brain. She turned to surrender.

Then suddenly, even as she tried to speak, there rose before her eyes, with horrifying vividness, the scene the Doctor had described to her; once more Richard leaned forward on the divan, calling to the dog and snapping his fingers. Why did he speak in a woman’s voice? Was it the spirit of another that entered his body and talked of things he did not know? The young man rode beside her flushed with life—she could marry him, him alone—but not It.

The question came again, whispered hoarsely this time from lips dry with fear:

“Answer—answer me, darling. Are you willing to belong to me now?”

“No!” she cried out. “Oh, no, no! I am afraid to marry you! I might want to be free!”

IV.

BERTHA WALTZINGER, hastening down to late tea on the lawn, stopped abruptly and gave a searching look around her.

Nearby the master of the house, lean and gray, stood feeding his white peacocks on the side terrace. At a little distance, beneath the magnolias, sat Mrs. Catcliffe, knitting emphatically and talking to the Doctor. A servant brought out an enormous silver tea-tray and arranged it near them.

Miss Waltzinger joined the old gentleman, and, crossing the grass, took her seat with him by the table. At that moment she caught sight of Richard coming towards them through the shrubbery. The expression on his face made her realize with alarm what a blow her answer had been to him. But he advanced with an air of forced

cheerfulness, and she saw that he had nerved himself to meet her naturally, so as to hide the situation from his father as much as possible.

He was still in riding-clothes, and tied in a handkerchief he held something which was kicking violently.

"Have this seat, my boy," old Dulaney said, rising as usual to give his chair to his son.

"What *have* you got?" Ingersol questioned.

"My dear fellow, it's a guinea-pig," Richard drawled, untying the handkerchief and displaying a tiny rabbit with a downy white tail; then he added, "Some one take it quick! When I hold a thing like that I have an impulse just to squeeze it to death." He had looked at the girl and lost his self-control entirely; the casual expression in his eyes changed to a gaze of despair, the delicate, sensitive mouth quivered.

"Where on earth did you get it, Dick?" she asked hastily.

"I chased him for miles and miles and miles in the broiling sun," the young man answered flippantly, rousing himself with an effort, "and when I caught up with him he was hanging by his tail from a grapevine, and I took hold of him and shook him—*just like this!*" Richard ended, suddenly jumping up and shaking Mrs. Catcliffe playfully three or four times.

"Richard!" the Doctor protested.

"Oh, don't correct the boy," his father pleaded.

"Let me pour you some tea, Auntie," Bertha said hastily, to divert attention.

"Yes, one lump, and you must make it weak," Mrs. Catcliffe insisted, still indignant. "If you don't, it keeps me awake."

"Yes, weak by all means," Richard remarked in an aside to the rabbit. "It would be awful if she had an attack of insomnia in the midst of the conversation."

Possibly knowing that he could not bear to be in the girl's presence a moment longer, he rose and went towards the stable, apparently absorbed in an argument with the rabbit. He held it up before him and addressed it as a guinea-pig; sometimes approving warmly of its opinions, again smacking it for disagreeing with him. There was nothing in what he said, but it was the intimacy of his manner, and his adorable and absurd personality, which left even the old lady convulsed with laughter as he went out of sight. Bertha, who alone knew what the effort cost him, felt a great wave of admiration sweep over her at his courage.

"You follow him—he might want something, Weasle," old Dulaney urged. "And if you wish to see me in the library now, Doctor, I am ready to go."

About dark, Bertha Waltzinger left her aunt and went to her room. Her mind was filled with anxious thoughts of her lover, whom she had seen an hour ago ride away to fight out his disappointment alone. As she sat by the open window in the twilight, she was conscious of the depth of Richard Dulaney's love for her as she had never been before; she felt his charm as though he were in the room with her, yet with it, stronger still, came her fear of his other consciousness. Having a candid and open disposition, she was repelled by the hidden force of this power. Was it a thing separate from him? What would it turn out to be? Sitting immovable, there came up to her like an answer the voices of her host and the Doctor; first the hesitating, querulous tones of the older man.

"My opinion of it, you say? I have never tried to explain it to myself, for it is something I could not bear to investigate. I have never believed fully in the supernatural—never in spirits or mediums—and yet it was his mother's voice. I don't see that there *can* be any normal explanation of it."

"My reason for asking you"—the Doctor was hoarse with excitement—"is because I have found out the cause at last! I have received letters to-day that convince me beyond a doubt. It is very simple: Richard was a baby in the room where the tragedy occurred, and whatever happened that night he saw and heard, and the frightful shock of it made some clear-cut impression on his subconscious mind. He cannot remember it, but this germ of thought reproduces itself in his brain from time to time and he repeats what he heard that night."

"Impossible! You believe that? How can—?"

"Why, such things are well known now—there are many similar cases. Listen to this: 'A child who was born in Mexico learned to speak Spanish, and had a nurse she called *Maree-a*. She was brought from there in her second year and forgot the language, her nurse, and everything connected with that time. Twenty-three years later she was hurt in an accident in St. Louis, and on becoming conscious immediately began to talk in Spanish and called for *Maree-a*.'

"But with Richard it was his mother's voice."

"That is just the point—she was talking in the room at the time, and her words are reflected back to you as clearly as if his mind were a mirror. It's a reflection, sir! It puzzled me, too, at first, but it's a reflection."

There was a long silence. "I have always hoped," the old man resumed dreamily, "that he might say something which would throw a light on what happened that night. My wife—she was a brilliant, nervous little thing—had the same misfortune about intemperance that the boy inherits; they all did in her family. She came home from

a ball one night, and, I suppose, found Louise and Fifine—the child and her little dog—lying there. She was never able to tell me about it. I had hoped that some day, when Richard repeated her words, I might find out."

"It is not impossible yet. He might—what is it, Wessle? What has happened?"

"'E's been hurt, sir. No, it's not that this time; it's the mare, sir. She fell with 'im jumping a ditch."

The man hastened before them back to his master, refusing to leave his side for an instant except when sent to the frightened and anxious girl upstairs, to carry news. Richard was unconscious, but not badly hurt, they thought now; or it was just a slight concussion of the brain, the doctor said. Finally he came up to say that Mr. Dulaney had sent for her.

"He is better now," Dr. Ingersol whispered encouragingly, as he met her at the door. "His arm was hurt by the fall, and I have just finished bandaging it. His father thought you might wish to be near him when he comes to himself."

Summoning all her self-control, Bertha entered the room. The light was dim, and at first she could see only the old man. He sat with bent head near his boy, all the devotion of an anxious mother in his attitude, leaning over eagerly to catch the few words that his son murmured. Then she drew nearer and looked down.

Richard was lying limp and unconscious on the bed, his head back, his wonderful strange eyes half closed, the hair pushed away from his damp forehead, and the wet red mouth partly open. Suddenly there broke from his lips the sound of a woman's voice, exultant, and both sweet and cruel:

"*Regardez, Ree-chard!* I have killed them both! They stir no more; they have ceased to struggle. *Mon ange, Fifine,* see the blood on the little *blanche* curls! Here, here, *Fifine!*" the voice called out, and the boy raised up, snapping his fingers. "She comes not. See, ah, see! I have put the child's head on Fifine, the dog's head on Louise, so; I will play they are my children, both. See the little *blanche* curls on Louise's body! Her little dog nose!" There followed peal after peal of gleeful laughter.

A fearful horror, more penetrating than any cold, crept over the occupants of the room.

"Oh, my God!" Ingersol gasped at length. "His mother!—she did it herself! And you——"

The voice started once more dreamily. "I wish not to leave you. I must array myself for the ball. *Adieu, mes enfants;* thus will I

find you—you—you,” the voice repeated monotonously—“you—you—you—on my return.”

V.

RICHARD DULANEY, assured at last that the attendant was sleeping, rose and stole silently out on the gallery to the head of the wide stone stair.

The chill damp grayness of the dawn was over everything, and the stirring air of night had become still, expectant, and unnatural. For these few moments an air of mystery enveloped the earth—the earth waiting for the coming of day.

All night, back in the close room, he had been half-conscious of the kind, gruff explanations of the doctor, his father's anxious entreaties to Bertha Waltzinger, and finally the thrilling rapture of the moment when she had promised to become his wife. The sweetness of that moment still lingered, but into the midst of it had come a doubt.

Now, as his mind cleared, he saw with singular vividness the full consequences of his mother's deed. He felt the instability of her temperament in his veins, the germ of her unreason in his brain, and added to this the fatal weakness of past generations growing wild and rank within him; yet a sweetness and nobility of character still flowered there, unspoiled, which made him unwilling to allow the woman he loved to share his fatal inheritance.

The east became lighter, outlining the slender figure at the head of the stairway, standing, as many a man has stood before him, chained fast in the fetters of heredity. His face was very white, and he frowned slightly, as if in pain; one arm, bandaged, hung in a sling. The old air of careless indifference was gone, leaving a pitiful droop to the corners of the arched red mouth.

For a long time he stood motionless, gazing out; and as he looked the sun rose, lighting up the scene which lay before him.

The park swept away to his left; before him the lawn ran smoothly down to meet a shallow lake. On the right-hand side was a high brick wall, and half-way down, partly hidden by magnolias, stood a small, barred gate. He took one step towards it, stopped, and hesitated.

For a moment a struggle swept over him—desire for the girl he was leaving, temptation to linger and let Fate decide his course, a conviction that to release Bertha Waltzinger from her promise he must go forever; then he walked quietly down the side lawn, passed for the last time beneath the heavy-scented magnolias, unfastened the gate, and went out.

THE OTHER FAT LADY— AND ME

By *Augusta Kortrecht*

Author of "A Dixie Rose," etc.

T was Saturday morning, and we, the House of Abercrombie, lingered pleasantly at the breakfast table while father read aloud from his paper snatches concerning the Wonder World Museum, which, it seemed, was to exhibit in our town that day:

"The Man Who Set the Universe a-Thinking! The Missing Tie 'Twixt Man and Beast! The Fat Lady and Her Antipode, the Human Skeleton!"

My parents laughed light-heartedly at the array of marvels, but the last words had arrested my attention with a throb of painful interest, for I was a fat little girl, and my stoutness was a cloud over an otherwise radiant childhood. A human skeleton! Could such bliss be achieved by mortal flesh and blood? An unreasoning jealousy of this favored creature seized upon me, and I remained in unhappy reverie until father had gone, and mother summoned me to the nursery to be dressed for dancing-school. Aunt Mandy, our colored mammy, regarded the toilet-making with grim disapproval, which burst into speech as mother called for my very prettiest finery.

"Lawsy, Miss Alice," she grumbled, "how-come you ain't 'structin' dat chile erbout de devil an' his breath er fire an' brimstone 'stid er bloatin' her up wid prideful raiment? Dese tell me dat."

Now, it was recognized among us that Aunt Mandy exhibited her piety and her worldliness in well-defined streaks, as good bacon shows its fat and lean; but my heart fell at this intimation of a spell of pious scruples threatening our outing. My gentle mother, however, only said:

"Why, Aunt Mandy! I was in hopes you would like to take the children. You enjoy seeing them dance, and——"

The old woman snorted in a spoiled way she had, and interrupted: "Who, Miss Alice? Me? No, ma'am. Dis ain't no time for follies. I got to spen' dis day askin' inquirements 'bout de pastor er de Searchlight Church, what has de heart-plumbago mighty bad. You-all owes me a holiday, an' I 'bleege to have it now."

Mother sighed a little, but gave in and urged her to consider herself free for the gracious work of love to fellow-man. Then she tied my big blue sash, shook its loops out over my lace skirts, and bade me walk off a bit so that she could see the whole effect. Before she could speak again, Unker Henry, our man cook, shuffled in and handed her an envelope, and mother, reading it, gave a little cry.

"Oh!" she said, already rising and beginning to get together her own outdoor things. "It's Mrs. Robinson. She is very ill, and they have sent for me. I must go at once. Unker Henry, I wonder if you could take the children——"

The old man cut her short. He clapped a withered hand to the small of his crooked back, and puckered his face into a sudden agony.

"Miss Alice," he whined, "I was dess agoin' to ast you. Could you please, ma'am, gimme a dollar ef you got ary one you don't keer much erbout? De misery sholy goin' to be my death, an' I must get a little liniment an' go to bed."

At his entreaty, mother's face softened in sympathy, and she gave him some money, whereupon he hastened away with an alacrity that was astounding for one so crippled by the rheumatism.

Next minute mother was ready to leave us. She was too hurried to give much time to explanation, but injunctions poured back over her shoulder as she departed. They were injunctions for me, little Ellen Abercrombie, and the very sound was ominous. First of all, I was to keep my brother Charce happy. We could not go to dancing-school, because there was no one to go with us. Aunt Mandy would come home presently from her mercy errand, and meanwhile I must be careful about my finery and my evil passions, not letting the one get soiled or the other rise. The last words floated in at the front door:

"I'm only at the Robinsons', after all, and if you really need me, you can come. Unker Henry will be down-stairs, only you must n't bother him and make him cross, because he's sick."

How big the house was! I had never dreamed there could come a time when mother and Aunt Mandy would both be out of sight at once. It seemed somehow to put them on a plane with the Good Lord, who, although not visible, was understood to have us under His protection and to wish us well.

We wandered into the kitchen and discovered that Unker Henry had also disappeared, and then Charce and I looked at each other with real dismay. My little brother was a very lion for courage on occasion, but in all ordinary troubles he fell back on baby habits. His lip began to quiver, and that spurred me to inspiration. Some poetry which I had heard came back to help us out.

"Charce," I cried, "do you know, precious, what kind of a keen is a sickle keen?"

"No," acknowledged my brother frankly, holding the lip-quiver in abeyance until he found whether my plan was worthy. "Do you, Ellen?"

I did n't, and his question disconcerted me, but I went on:

"Don't you remember about the reaper whose name is Death and with his sickle keen? I'll tell you, Charse. Less play death. It's the nicest game I know. You can be the bearded grain at a breath—take the hobby-horse's tail for a beard—and I'm going to find the nursery scissors, or a hat-pin maybe, and I'll come sneaking out as quiet as a mouse when you're not looking, and jump up and reap you."

"Rip me, Ellen?"

A hunted look flashed across his face, and I changed my cast of parts with lightning speed.

"No, I'll tell you what," I cried. "You better be the angel. I can wrap you up in sable——"

"What's that?" he wanted to know.

But his suspicions were beginning to try my patience. "I don't know what it is," I answered irritably. "It's no matter what it is; just so you play, it's anything you want. I'm going to wind you up tight in Aunt Mandy's shawl, and stick a paper star on your forehead, and you've got to climb to the top of the swing and come floating down and reap the yellow kitten and the gold-fish. Would you like that?"

For a breathless moment I thought he would, but the light faded from his eyes almost as soon as born there, and he looked up to where the swing towered high above our heads.

"I don't know how to float," he objected.

"Why, Charse," I explained glibly, "that's nothing—only flying. You get up as high as ever you can, and shut your eyes and jump. That's the way young angels always learn to fly at first, I reckon."

He thought it over, while I waited hopefully; then he said: "I don't want to be an angel. Why can't I take a hat-pin and reap you just standing still?"

That did not appeal to my sense of the poetical, and I tried to make him see where his plan was wrong; but he grew suddenly cold to the idea altogether. While I still talked he went about and gathered up one or two of his choicest treasures—the marble bust of Homer, which he dearly loved—and then he came and stood beside me.

"Good-by, Ellen," he said soberly. "I'm going to find my mother."

I was aching to go with him, but one little word drove me back. In all crises she became *his* mother. It never occurred to him to invite me to join him in seeking protection. Even now I begged him tremulously to stop, but he would not listen. He cast off my beseeching hand, and, serenely bent upon his own sweet peace, took his way along Shelby Street to seek it.

For a long time I cowered in a corner of the marble porch, under the fragrant shadow of the yellow jessamine on its trellis. I watched my brother's form grow smaller and smaller, and I took a sudden frightened decision that when he turned into Linden, out of sight, I would follow. I was telling myself passionately that I had been badly treated, when there fell upon my ears a voice that was strange and yet familiar. The accents were cordial. The ring of it was young and hearty. It could belong to but one individual in all my world, and recognition of this fact brought panic with it. I forced myself to peep through the jessamine trellis, and gazed upon Charley-f'om-the-Orphum-House! There had been a time when this young gentleman was, by my mother's Christian sweetness, under standing invitation to spend a day with us each month, but the custom had been discontinued some time ago, and a more docile orphan chosen in his place.

Now I yearned for my little brother. He had fought Charley-f'om-the-Orphum-House! On account of his sister Ellen he had fought and conquered him! But while I mused Charley was coming toward me.

"Hello, Ellen," he called nonchalantly. "How much money you got? I've done run away."

"From the Orphum-House?" I asked, feeling that he had shown a new sign of being dangerous.

"Nope," came the answer, with biting sarcasm; "from the White House, of course. I want all the money in the place."

We had no money. The very day before father had taken the dimes and quarters from our toy banks and carried them off to be changed into dollar bills. He knew a place uptown where they did it by some splendid magic. But he had not yet brought home the bills. I blessed my stars that it had happened thus. I told Charley, but he was cast down only for the winking of an eye.

"Aw, rats!" he commented briefly. "But there's old rags and iron around, and Darby's is only just at the corner."

I had often heard of Darby. He was the old-clothes man, who bought Aunt Mandy's cast-off finery, and he was the richest person in all the world. Charley pushed past me and entered the front door, and I followed uninvited in his wake. In the kitchen he put together a heap of various and sundry things. There was a great kettle of solid brass, which shone like gold; there were Unker Henry's white linen coat and aprons; and there was a good old Sheffield carving set which my father prized. In gaping horror, I watched his movements for a second, and then I turned away.

"I'm going to tell," I called back. "I'm going to tell my mother."

He was after me like a flash, and, catching my elbows in his strong hands, he pulled me back into the pantry. But instead of threats his tone held sweet coaxing when he said:

"Ellen, did you ever hear about the Wonder World Museum?"

My heart leaped to the witchery of this idea. He saw my face soften, and went on quickly:

"I'm going there, to see all them dandy things. They got a Fat Lady. They got a Human Skeleton."

I wriggled a little in his grasp. "Want to come along?" said Charley.

I looked upon my father's belongings and grew strong; I thought upon the Human Skeleton and grew weak. Charley read my capitulation in my face, and left me while he went upstairs to look for string and paper. I puffed up behind him, but before I reached the nursery a yell of savage triumph told me he had come upon new quarry. I hastened on. Charley held open the door of my mother's dressing-room, and there, limp and helpless on their pegs, as if frightened by his unseemly clamor, hung the most gloriously beautiful display of finery.

They were my mother's wedding dresses! They looked so chaste as they hung there, seeming to shrink together in maidenly reserve at sound of our childish voices. For a moment we looked in silence up to the pretty ghost of mother's girlhood; then the orphum pushed me to one side and began to gather the dresses down from their pegs.

"Gee!" he exulted in unholy glee. "But they'll bring a lot of money! I won't bother with old pots and things. Ole Darby ought to gimme a whole dollar for this."

Only now I understood! Everything grew black before my eyes. The blood rose to boiling point in my little veins. He was going to sell our wedding finery to the rag-man!

I would head him off. Violence was out of the question, and only by cunning could I hope to outwit him. While he folded the dresses into heartbreaking creases I hastened below and locked the doors one by one, dropping the keys in mixed confusion behind the carved hall seat. Then I waited in trepidation. But the curdling yell I expected came from beyond and not within. Charley had not come down the stairs at all. He had let himself to the ground by way of the yellow jessamine trellis, and by the time I had found the key and unlocked the door again, he was perched on the gate-post, his bundle clasped in his arms, a grin of engaging innocence upon his face.

I was entirely outdone and defeated. I had played a stroke of trickery and had lost. Dejection crept upon me and chilled my blood. Then the call of virtue sounded once more within my conscience. I would go and tell! Even yet the robbery might be checked, and our wedding dresses saved! I started toward the gate upon my righteous mission. But I had reckoned without my orphum guest.

From his perch upon the post he leaned down and caught me

easily by the arm. "Ellen," he said distinctly, with honeyed allurement in his voice, "I reckon you'll never get another chance to see a Human Skeleton. He might tell you what kind of stuff he eats to keep him skinny—maybe!"

A rebound of animal spirits surged like ether to my brain. And yet I searched my soul. Had I not done to the letter what my mother had commanded? Had I not thrice offered to my brother the diverting game of reaping and being reaped? Had I not bravely and single-handed attempted the rescue of the Abercrombie wedding garments? Was I not blameless? I knew I was. I looked up to where Charley was scrambling down from the gate-post. There were moments when I faltered under the tax of being the strong member of the family; when I longed to follow something bigger than myself. The orphum was square and sturdy. For another second we questioned each other mutely, and then I said:

"Charley, if I *can't* make you stop, and you *do* sell the wedding clothes to Darby, and I *can't* help it any way I try—can I go with you and see the Museum?"

I still wore my dancing-school finery; I had no hat, and my black Indian hair was topped with a massive pale blue bow. I gave no thought to self, but pattered beside my escort down the street. As we passed the corner of Linden Avenue I might have turned off toward mother and the Robinsons', but I did not consider it for an instant. The stopping at Ole Darby's was a detail which made no impression on me; my mind was staring into the next hour, and I saw myself learning the secret of the Human Skeleton.

We did not poke. We made a detour of some two blocks, turned northward, and struck out at a rapid walk in a world all new to me. I kept up only by the greatest effort, and my plumpness caused me to pant unhappily. I was in agony of fear that Charley would grow impatient of my painful progress and order my retirement. But he did not.

We were presently caught up into a crowd of people, white, black, and yellow, jostling one another on the pavement. A tiny midget in red coat and cap beat upon a monstrous drum, and called the passer-by to stop and stare. We were swept along through a big door over which I caught the word "Museum," and Charley held me with one hand while he deftly bought two tickets with the other. At last we were in the Wonder World Museum!

We saw the Rubber Skin Man. He was large of frame, and was clad in a bathing suit of green and yellow stripes. He looked very cross and very hungry. His performance was just over, and the people were surging out; but we lingered, and at Charley's muttered order I feebly begged him to show us what he could do.

"Can't you pull out your rubber skin for us?" I asked.

The gentleman on the platform regarded us coldly. "In von hour," he responded crossly. "You go oud now. I rest me."

I was rebuffed, but Charley urged me on with a push and another muttered order. "I can't stay an hour," I told the Rubber Man. "I'd pull my skin for you if mine was rubber. Just a little on the back of your hand, you know. I would n't be so mean."

"Go oud," repeated the Rubber Man, with rising wrath. "It ees not time to pull. Ged oud."

I thought he was coming down off his platform, and I turned and fled. For the next hour—or perhaps it was a week, so entranced was I—we wandered through a maze of wonders. We had peanuts and red lemonade and popcorn which was stuck together with half-cooked molasses. Charley spilled his lemonade—by *deft design*, I thought—over my sash; and the Trained Gorilla reached a long hairy arm through the bars of his cage, and tore the lace from the front of my frock—*real lace* it was, and not to be thought of lightly. But I remembered mother's and Aunt Mandy's frequent admonitions to forget myself and think of others. I considered Charley's feelings and those of the Gorilla, and I never spoke a word of blame.

The thought of the Fat Lady I had put from me with determined control of mind over matter. Her I did not wish to see; but I longed to speak with the Human Skeleton. I had always had a sneaking jealousy of skeletons, even inhuman ones. If this living one could impart to me the manner of reducing myself to his proportions! If my round legs might fall away to slimness, like Charce's! I made my desire known to Charley, and he answered with a queer wink instead of words.

We rambled along without apparent aim or destination, my escort in the lead. Presently he ran up half a dozen steps to a big platform, and bade me follow, which I innocently did. Suddenly he pushed me forward and whispered in a tone that froze the blood within me:

"Run, Ellen! There's an awful snake broke loose, or something, and you've got to run to the front and down them steps out to the door."

Of all things, snakes terrified me most. I never thought of treachery or of trouble. I did not take time to murmur "Now I lay me," as was my habit in times of dire distress, but trusted rather to my legs. I ran heavily across the platform and looked for the promised exit. There was no way down from that side! Instead, I gazed into a sea of staring faces, all upturned in eager enjoyment of this new feature. I looked back for Charley, saw him vaulting from the raised dais, and knew that I was betrayed. Next moment he darted around and lifted a voice and finger, both hateful with mockery.

"There's two of them!" he yelled with savage glee. "Get on to the Twin Fat Ladies!"

I had thought I stood alone, but now I felt a presence at my side—an enormous, overshadowing presence. Slowly, very slowly—my heart nearly stopped with the humiliation of it—I raised my eyes upward the length and breadth of the other Fat Lady's figure. She was dressed in crimson velvet, although the day was stifling. She had big, bare, red arms. Her face was Awful! Then she greeted me in a voice strangely inadequate for such a giantess.

"Hello," squeaked the other Fat Lady. "Where did you drop from, little sister?"

She called me "sister"! She recognized the likeness! The crowd down below accepted me as part of their legitimate entertainment and were beginning to applaud accordingly. My face grew scarlet, and beads of miserable sweat broke upon my forehead. My knees knocked together. The Fat Lady reached out a hand and, dragging me nearer the audience, launched into a flowery and mendacious speech, spun on the moment's inspiration. She told them I would be fed on potatoes and oatmeal, and in three years I would be heavier than she!

For a time the onlookers hung silent on her words, then all at once from two different quarters came two cries in as many voices. Each cry had a familiar ring, and even in my agony I saw Charley, at recognition of them, take a header through the jostling crowd and dash for freedom. Then I was caught from behind in an embrace that felt heavenly. A well-known voice came down to me:

"'Fo' de Good Lord, Ellen Davidson Abercrombie! You sholy is bawn to be a tribulation to all us Christian martyrs! Ain't I always gesticulated dat?"

Other feet hurried up the steps. Another voice broke in:

"Well, look at dat Mandy 'oman! You sholy can't truss nobody dese days! Ain't Miss Alice let you go 'way on a mercy errand, an' how-come de Jedge's chile in all dis mess er low-down meanness?"

Unker Henry would have taken me into his arms, but my nurse clung to me even while she answered back with malicious spirit:

"De man what's layin' in bed a-groaning wid de misery! Go 'way fom hyah! Ain't I behole you one solid hour in de tent wid de gemman what sets de Universt to Thinkin'? An' all us other niggers 'bleege to wait? Lawsy, lawsy, don't you talk!"

The Other Fat Lady had shrunk—not in real flesh perhaps, but in importance. We held the popular gaze. Our little procession wound its way down and through the gaping crowds. I had been sobbing silently, but with a sudden memory I now blubbered. The sound went from end to end of the Wonder World Museum, and mingled with the noises of the other freaks, and the recriminations of my rescuers.

"I want to see the Human Skeleton!" I screamed. "I want to see the lovely Human Skeleton!"

But Aunt Mandy only soothed me with terms of endearment, and we passed out, leaving that fortunate creature unseen.

When we got home my mother and my brother Charce had not yet returned; but under the yellow jessamine trellis my father sat, a glass of iced lemonade on the table at his elbow. He asked no questions, but I thought he searched me from the crown of my hair with its limp blue ribbons, to the toes of my dusty dancing slippers. I climbed upon his knee, and into his heart I poured out the story of the day, with all its badness and sadness and disappointment and distress. And my precious father untied each knot and smoothed away each sorrow. Our wedding dresses could be recovered! Next month the visiting orphum should be Phelia! Would I like to have Charley punished—whipped? No, I shook my head at that, and the revulsion of feeling which he was creating came. Poor Charley! Brokenly I whispered that I myself had been just as much to blame, and father patted me softly as I confessed it.

And then—and then—I faltered at the next even to my father. He had to bend his ear quite close to catch the words. Then he lifted my hot face and kissed me on the brow. He laughed, but the laugh was sane and wholesome, and not jeering. His eyes were serious, and his assurance carried healing conviction to my poor vanity-bitten heart. Little girls never grew up to be Fat Ladies with cotton velvet gowns! "What foolishness!" my father said. And besides, he had noticed that very day how slender I was growing!

I leaned back against him in perfect content. I was almost asleep. His dear voice came from afar asking if there were anything else I wished to know. My drowsy mind became active again for one brief second, and jumped back into the earlier day before I had gone to see the Other Fat Lady.

"Father," I demanded, groping sleepily for something that had baffled me, "what kind of a keen is a sickle keen?"



MICHAL

BY JOSEPH W. DORR

A MEADOW without a flower,
A grove without a bird,
A lake without a sail,
A river without water—
A desert,
A salty sea—
A Hebrew wife whose breasts
Have not been pressed
By infant lips.

For but one little laugh
This bitter cup must quaff;
So Michal mourns with thee,
O Jephtha's daughter!

Oh, had I wept instead of laughed
That day the Ark came in,
I had not paid this penalty
For flippant, foward sin.

But now, O Jephtha's daughter,
Your fate was heaven, but mine—

A childless virgin you—
Israel's daughters mourn with thee,
But I, a childless wife,
Woe, woe is me!

None pity, none bewail
That Michal's hope is gone,
And no Deliverer may come
From her in future days
(Jehovah said it),
To call her memory blessed;
Her breast may never throb
By infant hands caressed.
And Michal mourns alone.

LIGHT RUNNING

By Mark F. Wilcox

IT was at the time of the daily pajama promenade. Corson and I, appearing on deck for the first time in equatorial latitudes and warm-weather wear, hid our timorous modesty in an assumed carelessness of demeanor, which soon became real as we noted other unpadded caricatures of men trying to look at home in the absence of business-clothes and women. The liner, south-bound for Cape Town, on this the third day from London, had left the perpetual storm of the Bay of Biscay, and now stood upright on a shining sea as smooth as glass, as wide as the universe. We could not tell where it met the sky; both were one, an undefined infinity of hazy blue.

Corson and I expanded in the bright immensity of our outlook and our striped garments. Corson thought of his wife.

"It's a shame for us men to enjoy the cool of the day this way, while the ladies have to stay below until after breakfast." He spoke in general terms, and I guessed he was but echoing sentiments voiced in his own cabin. I had heard the same from another source in my cabin, and, being duly coached, I was ready to agree, but was unexpectedly interrupted.

"I say it's a shame," reiterated Corson dogmatically. He was looking pugnaciously over my shoulder. I turned to find a burly person, wearing a loose, checker-board suit and with a big cigar in his mouth, grinning into my face. He leaned against the rail beside me.

"It's a shame the way *they* hog the stateroom and the morning nap," he said with a twinkle in his blue eyes, and yawned loudly, with such scandalous disregard of conventionality that we could not avoid the infection.

The laugh that followed the epidemic of gapes made us feel well acquainted, but for the sake of convenience we told our names.

"Barnes," he said, smiling—"not of New York, but of Kipton, Ohio."

We were indeed glad to find a fellow exile from America.

"Really, we have no right to expect the ladies to keep below till after breakfast," said Corson, reverting argumentatively to the topic that had brought us together.

Barnes was disappointingly acquiescent. "I agree with you there," he said heartily. "Let 'em come up, if they want to."

Corson could hardly voice his horror. "What! With us in this garb?"

Barnes's blue eyes were twinkling, but he answered earnestly enough, "Why not? If bathing-suits are proper *by the sea*, why not pajamas *on the sea*? Really, there's more cloth in pajamas."

"You don't mean that!" snorted Corson. "Why, just think——"

Barnes interrupted with a whimsical laugh. "I never think—not until I really have to. But, honestly now, don't you believe some of these conventions about dress just a bit—what that fat Englishman over there would call *absuhd*? A man can't go down-street in his shirt-sleeves, but he can race before thousands in thin white nothings called a running-suit."

"You must be one of these 'Back-to-nature' faddists," put in Corson contemptuously.

Barnes's easy laugh rang out again. "Perhaps I am," he said evasively. "But, speaking of races, I was at a college track-meet once where a short-legged fellow ran with nothing on but his shirt and shoes. Fact! And he was n't sent to jail or to an insane asylum for it, either. He got married a month after. That was punishment enough, I suppose."

"You don't say! How extrawdinary!" interjected the fat, red-cheeked Englishman, who, unnoticed by us, had lounged within hearing, as had also a few more of the promenading passengers. A semi-circle was forming about the rail on which Barnes leaned. He looked reminiscently at his half-burnt cigar which had gone out, reached into the region of his vest-pocket for a match, but, encountering flannel, smiled and flung the weed over his shoulder, with the air of one clearing decks for action. Putting his palms on the rail, he lifted himself to a sitting position. His solid frame responded jerkily to the throbbing of the propellers, but he kept his seat easily enough.

"It happened in Cleveland about three years ago," he began. "There was a meet of what is known in Ohio as the Big Six colleges, Cass, Westlake, State, Obliner, Worcester, and Chesapeake. Our university, Cass School, of course was the best. We had hopes of winning the meet, and with it the championship of the State; and it would have been a walk-away but for a surprise sprung on us by Chesapeake. They had a man who had n't appeared before in any meet, but who proved a champion in the field events, where we had figured to get the biggest lead. He was a wonder at weight-tossing, and he took enough points away from us to give the only rival we feared, Obliner College, the lead. When it came to the relay race at the end of the meet, Obliner was thirty-seven to our thirty-five.

"The advantage was decidedly with Obliner, for she had proven strong in the dashes, and her team of four in the mile relay had already won three firsts and as many seconds. Not one of our four—we'll call them—let's see—Jones, Brown, Johnson, and—and Thompson—had done better than a second. To make matters worse, Thompson, who was also a weight-thrower and our captain, had already worked pretty hard, having appeared in three field and two track events, with a bum knee at that—one he got playing football the year before.

"I tell you there was gloom in our camp as our athletes crowded around the cot of their leader in the dressing-room beneath the grand-stand. He was having his knee massaged, but while the rubber worked he tried to cheer his squad. He was naturally optimistic, and it was easy for him to see a hope of victory yet. His knee was nothing. He would give it a good rest, though, and lie in his blanket until it came his turn for the final effort in the last lap of the race. It was teamwork, he said, that counted more than anything else in a relay—a good get-away, and absolutely no delay between heats. The Obliner men had the swelled head with their victories, and we would surprise them. So speaking, he put confidence and enthusiasm into our men.

"By that time the rubber had finished, and Thompson sat up on the cot with his red blanket about his knees. The men began to cheer for victory and for Thompson, and when time was called they rushed out bearing him on their shoulders, with the blanket still clinging loosely to his waist. The answering roar that came from our side of the bleachers and the grand-stand was the final stimulus needed to make our team ready to race a hurricane if necessary.

"Ours was a quarter-mile track, so each of the runners had to circle the oval once—from starting-point to starting-point before the grand-stand. Westlake and Chesapeake did not try at all for the relay, which left only four teams—State, Worcester, Obliner, and Cass. Jones was to take the first lap for our men, Brown was to follow, with Johnson after him, and Thompson at the finish, as I've just said.

"Luck was against us, and Jones made a poor start. He tried desperately to redeem himself, and came in third, with Obliner and State ahead. Brown went off like a bullet, but he overestimated his endurance, and before he got around he lost the ground he made, and Cass was third again, with Obliner and State still in the lead. By this time Obliner was nearly a quarter-lap ahead of us, and this distance was maintained, although Johnson, our third man, came in neck and neck with the State man. And then Thompson started.

"Up to the last instant he had lain on a bench with his red blanket about him, in order to keep his knee warm and in trim. Johnson must have been ten yards from him when he flung aside his covering and sprang onto the track—standing a-tiptoe, straining forward with his

body, and reaching back with his hand so that the least touch of Johnson's groping fingers would send him forward. And the crowd shouted louder than ever, for this was Thompson's last year at college, and his last appearance in athletics as an undergraduate. He was a champion, too, and well known in college circles. The next second Johnson had passed, slowed down, and stopped, and Thompson was off.

"In three leaps, it seemed, he had passed the State man, but Obliner was not to be so easily vanquished. She had the advantage of a quarter-lap and a winning runner on that last round, but Thompson was gaining.

"The excitement on the bleachers now was too intense for sound. The assembled thousands seemed to have been stricken dumb. In a thousand different attitudes they leaned forward and breathed gaspingly, their souls out upon the track laboring with the two runners. The absorption in the conflict was so profound they saw nothing extraordinary in Thompson's attire—nothing, until a high-pitched, cracked feminine voice aroused them as it were from a trance.

"'Land o' goodness!' it shrilled. 'Where's his panties!'

"The crowds started, looked, rubbed their eyes, and looked again. And then they laughed, screamed, howled, and at the same time kept urging on their favorites in an uproar, a babel of sound that was simply deafening. For there was Thompson, the pride of Cass School, if I may say it, flying over the cinders with nothing on but a loose, sleeveless shirt and a pair of running shoes.

"You will remember that he had been carried upon the field with a blanket around him, which he had kept about his limbs until his turn to run came. Those who had been with him in the dressing-room had forgotten that his trousers had been taken off so that the rubber would not soil them with his ointments. And of course no one could see through the blanket and thus be reminded of his shocking deshabille. Thompson could not tell, either, because running-pants are such short, light things, any way, you don't know you have them on unless you see them.

"And Thompson saw nothing wrong now but the distance between him and the numbered back of the Obliner runner. He must have been half way around the course before he was made aware of his horrible predicament. Through the turmoil of the throng, a small boy among the spectators on the farther side thrust a squeaky yell that penetrated even to Thompson's throbbing ear-drums.

"'Go it, shirt-tail!' came the caustic cheer, and Thompson took just one look at his bare shanks and then put out for home. He had been running some before, but I tell you he just doubled his speed then. He didn't cut 'cross lots, either. He kept straight after that Obliner man, and ate up the distance between like wild-fire.

"He ran so fast that nondescript shirt of his stuck to his body in front as though glued to him, while the scant tail lay out behind as though it had been starched and ironed. Greased lightning was n't in the same class with him. He went by the Obliner champion as though the fellow was standing still, and finished with a good three seconds to spare.

"But he kept right on going. Through the blanket that was held out to meet him, through the gleeful mob that was pouring out of the grandstand to congratulate him, and through the open door of the dressing-room, he went like a scared rabbit. His jovial team-mates found him under the cot, gripping it with both hands, as though he were afraid it would fly from him. Nothing would make him leave his position until he had been assured that the crowd outside had grown tired of waiting and gone home.

"He had a date with his best girl that evening. They had been engaged to be married some time, although she had hitherto refused to name the day. You can imagine how he felt as he climbed the stone steps to her door, for she lived in the city, and her parents had accompanied her to the meet. Her mother was in the parlor with her to receive him, which betokened evil for Thompson. The ice was so thick you could n't have broken it with a sledge-hammer. No reference at all was made to the chief event of the day. But in desperation at last he attempted an explanation in a roundabout fashion, showing how forgetful he was. As it happened, he had come without a scarf-pin, and the rueful face he made over the omission started a laugh that cleared the atmosphere somewhat. The mother retired shortly after that, and he had an opportunity to explain more directly. In the end the girl said, 'You certainly do need some one to look after you!'"

Barnes slipped off the rail suddenly. We followed his furtive stare, and beheld coming slowly along the deck from the aft companion-way a little woman clad in a pink kimona and pale resolve.

"And were they married?" asked an anxious listener, unmindful of the storm that seemed to threaten.

"Of course," said Barnes dryly. "What do you suppose she meant? They were married that June and lived happily ever after, I suppose. But excuse me, gentlemen," he added almost nervously. "I don't want to miss my breakfast, and I'm afraid it's getting very near the hour."

He broke through our ranks in the direction of the approaching woman.

"Jessie, what on earth are you doing up here in that rig?" we heard him throw out reprovingly before he had reached her.

"I guess I have as much right up here as you have, Thomas," she snapped. "But if you don't like to be seen up here with me, you'll

stay below with me. I should think you would know better by this time. First thing I know, you'll be running races again the way you did in Cleveland."

The last words were spoken in a low tone, evidently meant for his ears alone, but so incisive that they cut to us all. In the pregnant pause that followed the disappearance of the two, there broke out suddenly the warning note of the breakfast bugle.

"Most extraordinary!" puffed the fat Englishman. "Was he *him* and she *her*?"

Corson winked at me. "No," he said. "That's him, but she's it."

We went below without further comment, although the fat Englishman was apparently anxious to continue his slow speculation.

Thomas Barnes—Corson and I found the name on the purser's register—was seen no more on deck before breakfast.



THE TWO OLD MEN

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

THERE was something quaint and lovely about the two old men,
As they sat together in the crowded car.
I, and the other young people around me,
Watched them, and heard their quiet conversation.

We gathered, in that little trip down-town
Through the great city, thundering with pain,
That these two wise, yet simple, comrades knew
Each other long ago, and here revived,
Through some exquisite accident,
Their boyish friendship after many years.

We caught but fragments of their pleasant talk,
But quite enough to love them for the way
They both recalled the record of old times.

And I thought: When I am very old and very tired,
I hope God sends to me so naturally
An old, old crony to renew lost days;
A comrade whom I knew when I was young,
One, unashamed as I, to show his heart
Wholly to me, unmindful of the crowd,
The curious crowd that might be all about us.

THE MOTE IN THE EYE

By Gertrude Morrison

ARE you looking for Alexandria?" Alfred Rice, a stout, fair, prosperous man, discontinued his third time around the deck to stop beside the Rev. Eugene McCord.

Still sweeping the line of sea and sky, the minister replied, "Well, when we passed the Crete mountains yesterday I knew it would soon be time to look. Can't see anything, though. Have a look?" Passing the glasses to Rice, he sauntered over to his steamer chair. The Rev. Eugene McCord was dark, and handsome in an intellectual way. The firmness of his mouth was partly youth and the positiveness of its convictions; even more, a bequest from Covenanter forebears. He lounged in half-conscious grace, and glanced at random through a book he had picked up. "How's this?" he said to Rice, who had dropped into a companion chair, and was lighting a cigarette.

"To my wife,
Whose creed is her life.

"Yes. That's good." He turned to the name on the back of the book. "Ah, Craig—Stafford Craig. I know his works. A man with a heart and a soul."

"Mac," asked Rice suddenly, "can a woman have too much religion?"

"I wish *one* had more," growled the young parson.

"Absent treatment a bit out of your line, I take it?" jested the other.

"She was a California girl. I see her now"—closing his eyes dreamily—"in white, her arms filled with poppies that nearly matched the gold of her hair—a twisty live-oak for background—green against the burnt yellow of the fields. Ah, California!" he sighed. "But her religion was all wrong—rather, she had n't much at all. I don't know how it is in those English colonies in Africa, where you have lived; but in the States, if you're of the East, you can't dodge it: you've got to take sides for or against religion. Something impels you. But out there—well, it's different. They can let it alone. A physical exuberance, outgrowth of their glorious climate, carries them along. They don't miss the peace of faith."

Rice walked to the rail and tossed overboard his cigarette. "My turn! I met her in Honolulu. She was ravishing—the kind that has a fluttering coo in her voice; but down deep she required a religion. I had none. She was the kind that could get you into heaven through her smile—but I was n't cad enough to go that way."

Next day the two men met in Cook's at Cairo. They were both bound for the Upper Nile Valley. While waiting their turn, they fell into conversation with a pleasant-faced fellow who, having just returned from there, gave them timely suggestions. They were speaking of him that evening as they sat at dinner in Shepheard's red-upholstered dining-room, and listened to the music from the back room.

"Nice chap," said Rice. "I liked his way."

"Yes. Very obliging. He must have—" The Rev. Eugene stopped short in his sentence. His eyes were fixed on a lady in white, and a gentleman who advanced the length of the room with her. The orange of poppy-fields in far-away California gleamed in her hair. Rice followed his glance, but, missing the lady as she passed behind a post, saw only the man.

"Well," he said, "speaking of angels—our friend at Cook's." Suddenly he too stopped.

The lady, now abreast of them, started, hesitated in uncertain recognition, then, as each sprang to his feet, unconscious of the other, extended her hand in gracious greeting.

"*You here! Both of you! And you know each other?*" she fluttered cooingly.

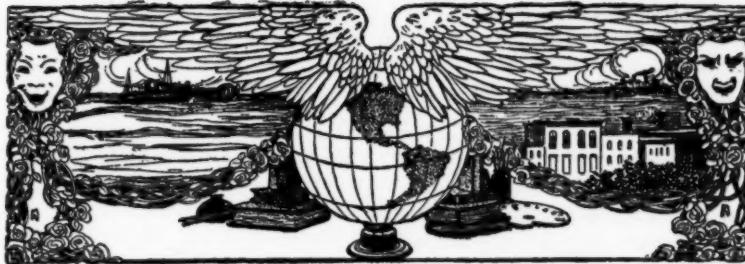
"Alicia—Miss Noyes," began the little minister, his eyes speaking where his tongue left off.

"When did you arrive?" asked Rice, the lazy nonchalance gone from his voice. "I did not see your name on the register."

"Perhaps you did not know it when you saw it," bantered the lady archly. "Let me introduce my husband. Stafford, you must meet these two old friends of mine. Mr. Rice—Mr. Craig. Mr. Rice was with us on the *Doric* from Yokohama to Honolulu. And this is the Rev. Mr. McCord, whom I knew in California. But your soup is growing cold. You have just come? Then you will go with us to-morrow at ten to the pyramids and the sphinx? And lunch with us out there at the Mena House? Until to-morrow, then." Alicia Noyes Craig passed on with her husband.

"The 'sphinx,' indeed," commented Rice.

McCord amended softly, "'Whose creed is her life?'"



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

PARTING WITH POLITICS

IT is not so very long since the general impression prevailed that the weather, the crops, and the salvation of the soul depended upon the election, the party in power, and the successful candidate. It used to be, too—only a short while since—that Wall Street was the great educator, indicator, and conductor. When Wall Street “viewed with alarm,” we shuddered. When Wall Street approved, we pitied the other man. But a much-needed object lesson is opening the eyes of late sleepers to more desirable conditions which are developing in the natural evolution of a great republic.

It is true that the announcement of a decline in the price of meat, following close upon the last election, was credited by millions to the downfall of the Republican party—for had they not been Republicans all their lives and just voted the Democratic ticket only to show their disapproval of the tariff tinkering which, they were told, was the direct cause of the high cost of living? Of course there was the phenomenal corn crop—three billion one hundred and seventy million bushels—raised under the Republican regime, which must have had a tendency to lower the price of meat; and of course the announcement of a decline was only a bluff, and did not materialize in most places, or amount to anything where it did appear; and of course, as a matter of fact, the tariff had precious little to do with the high cost of living, any way. But the tariff tinkers deserved a good strong blow, on general principles, and they got it; but the fact that the high cost of living

is still with us is proving a convincing argument that the game of partisan politics has been played almost to the limit.

Wall Street, too, is losing its power and influence, as every factor must—money and all monopolistic interests—when partisan politics fail to appeal to the masses; and the people, not the machines, do the thinking. Following the early election in Maine, stocks rose, for Wall Street laughed approvingly, saying that it foreshadowed a Democratic House, which would pass no Republican measures, while a Republican Senate would pass no Democratic measures, and while the Government was thus tied up Wall Street would be “free.”

That was good law ten years ago. But Wall Street and stand-pat politicians are at least that much behind the times. A new thought has crept into the public mind, and it was that, much more than tariff talk or hope of eternal salvation, which influenced the phenomenal vote at the last election. It was not new Democratic measures which won out, but old Republican principles which lost out. New Republican principles came back heartily indorsed; and the controlling conflicts of the next Congress will not be lined according to the stale old game of party politics, but as progressives against reactionaries. Men will be known by the principles they advocate, not by the blind habits of subserviency which have ranged them as Democrats and Republicans. Wall Street will find the Congress as little inclined as the public to hold up legislation on account of party tags. The men will still come to Washington wearing their party labels, but more and more, from now on, they will go home labelled according to their votes, and they will stand or fall as reactionaries or progressives. The terms will not be used to designate parties, but individuals. All this talk of a new party is nonsense. It is only another effort to keep politics in power; but we are parting with politics. Issues will always arise, and there must always be differences of opinion, and always parties to promulgate policies and present them to the public for their patronage. But it will more and more be the policies, the principles, and the candidates advocating or opposing them, which will appeal to the people and win or lose the day.

This fact stood out like handwriting on the wall in the last election, and the efforts of bosses and managers to utilize two or three conflicting incidents to turn the public mind back to the old way of working were grim failures. The new tendency of the public is to think for itself, to nominate its own candidates, according to its own convictions, and to hold them personally and directly accountable. Oregon has set the example. Other States have followed. All will be in line before long; for we are parting with politics, and the sooner the final farewell is spoken the better. It is the evolution of a republic.

The results will not be startling in legislation. There will be noth-

ing graphic, as enthusiasts would have us believe. Too heavy a burden is being laid upon new shoulders. There is more danger of temporary disappointment and temporary reaction. The new progressives will find themselves taking orders and acting in concert as meekly as the old guard. But real progress has been made in the public mind and will grow in the mind of the public servant. We are nearer than ever before—much nearer—to the ideal essential of a republic's Congress—a body of men, however labelled, devoted to public interests, not partisan politics.

In the natural course of development, we went through a period in inability to study and solve great and complex questions by any non-partisan, purely patriotic analysis. In the near past, some of our greatest statesmen have been sacrificed for attempting it. But we have taken a commendable step ahead, and some of our new statesmen have more recently been signally honored for doing the same thing. Let us continue to honor such efforts, irrespective of party, and push along the new idea that we have a right to think for ourselves, and act as individuals, upon principle, not policy—even to voting against the devil, though he be our party candidate, and to being a traitor to our country if our country is traitor to the right.

WILLARD FRENCH

STYLES IN AMUSEMENTS

THERE are fashions in amusements as in clothes or pictures, and it is not often wise to resurrect them. Growth is the dominating feature of existence, an evolutionary process which we are only beginning to comprehend. Yet there are courageous souls who ever and anon insist on giving us the amusements of a generation ago in the sublime exhibition of unqualified success. The modiste might as well use the fashion plates in old volumes of *Godey's Lady's Book* for contemporary styles.

Twenty-five years ago Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado" took the country by storm. Audiences marvelled at the gorgeous splendor of the production, with its varied color scheme, laughed at its compelling wit and satire, while the tuneful melodies rang in the ears for days and months. It was a triumph. This year the opera is being produced on a much more lavish scale. Those who heard it a quarter of a century ago have rushed with joyous expectation to hear it again; those who have only heard of it have flocked to taste of much-heralded joys. All have been interested, but it is likely that most have been disappointed. Nor is it likely that all could tell why.

In truth, the world has moved on. The wit of the early Eighties finds no echo of laughter, for it is either stale or not understood.

Modern stage mechanics have reduced the scenic splendor of "The Mikado" to a fire-fly's flash. The music is melodious, but people now want to hear Puccini and Charpentier.

This is no discredit to the opera, nor its most recent progenitors, for they have reaped their reward. Their experience is that of many others. People have not yet stopped going to hear a Patti farewell or to listen to Bernhardt's impersonation of Sardou's heroines. They do these things from personal or historic reasons, and find sufficient compensation even from an artistic standpoint. But the canons of art are changing; our sensibilities require new impressions, and our understanding must be appealed to in the light of the most recent knowledge. It is common for us to look back to a period in our own lives, or even far back into history, and make comparisons unfriendly to the present. We are generally mistaken in such judgments. There is no time like the present, and we deceive ourselves with vain illusions when we believe, or affect to believe, to the contrary.

JOSEPH M. ROGERS

THE GREAT POWER OF A LITTLE BOOK

THE late Leo Tolstoy's power as a writer is proverbial. His vigor as a controversialist needed no commentary, but the most effective of all his works was his latest—a mere pamphlet without polemics. "Three Days in a Village" would have aroused little interest outside of Russia, but the whole machinery of the Empire has been at work for months suppressing it—with the usual result: it is read everywhere in secret, which adds immeasurably to its power. This little piece of realism simply details the misery, the suffering, the degradation, and the infamy in a typical commune. The pictures are painted with the chiaroscuro power of Dante, without his poetry; with the realism of Hogarth, without a trace of his line of beauty; with the strength of Rodin, without his ever-present suggestion of nobility. It is the naked truth, and this is what has alarmed bureaucracy. It can stand lies or exaggeration, but when the truth is told, officialdom stands condemned.

The power of the state and the state church was used often in effort to suppress Tolstoy, without effect. He could neither be endured nor suppressed. There was desperation on the banks of the Neva; there was activity wherever the police could pierce, but the old apostle of Realism sat calmly in his home, unmoved and untouched by the storm about his devoted head.

It is not the art of Tolstoy that aristocracy fears; some of Gorky's equally gruesome tales of wretchedness have not been censored. It is

the power of the ideas behind Tolstoy's art which goads to madness the bureaucrats who have hedged about a weakling Czar and kept him ignorant for their own protection. Never was there a clearer demonstration of that profound apostolic truth: "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal." Suppressing the truth is often the surest way to make it known. What the Russian authorities fear is that the truth will set the people free.

JAMES M. FLANDERS

SPEAKING OF CONSERVATION—FOREST FIRES!

"CONSERVATION" has been a popular topic during the past two years. Thousands upon thousands of dollars have been spent in wars of words. Conventions, congresses, investigations, and political issues have resulted—but what else? Up to two years ago, we had been making phenomenal strides in the appreciation and preservation of the Nation's resources. For the past two years of legislative stagnation—economy, the politicians call it—besides all the government land which under one pretext and another has been absorbed, really by monopolies, for the benefit of a few at the expense of all, forest fires which might easily have been prevented have destroyed some sixty or seventy million dollars' worth, annually, of the standing timber of the country. The Forest Service has undoubtedly done its best, under handicaps, and it is notably true that the destructive fires of last fall started in private forests, being beyond control when they invaded the national reserves; but that is only an added instigation to stop talking and resort to effective legislation.

Congress has been asked again and again to provide sufficient means for the proper protection of our national forests, and laws for the necessary precautions in private domains, but every appropriation has been haggled over and cut down, and economy howled from the house-top. As a sample: Last year the Minnesota legislature was appealed to for forty thousand dollars, properly to protect her vast forests. This was promptly cut down to twenty-one thousand dollars. It is estimated that, besides human lives and other valuable property, sixty thousand dollars' worth of her standing timber went up in smoke last fall. Our national forests contain one hundred sixty-seven million acres—which is about one-fourth of the timberland owned by private interests, but less than three per cent. of the private land is at all properly protected.

Common humanity, to say nothing of public economy, demands immediate attention to this matter, and condemns the neglect and indifference of federal and local authorities. We do not pay our legis-

lators to spend their time in wrangling over whose duty it is and whose fault it was; but that is about all it has amounted to of late; while nearly two thousand human lives were lost last summer, and thousands of dollars' worth of property destroyed, besides the timber which was burned, to give politicians time to make issues out of the ways and means of conservation. Even while the great conservation congress was in session in Minnesota, and the members were thrashing out their differences of opinion, the fire was smouldering, which, by the first week in October, was a wall of flame a hundred feet high, fanned by a gale blowing seventy miles an hour, sweeping clean a tract thirty miles wide and eighty-five miles long, destroying half a dozen villages, and human and animal life which can only be estimated.

Now, the point is this: we may charge it to monopoly, plutocracy, or political degeneracy, to one view or the other of state and federal functions, to one system or another of conservation; but charity begins at home and so does the other thing. Go to the foundation, and you must turn upon yourself and say, "Thou art the man." In the last analysis, it is "the man behind the gun." No matter how far you live from a forest, duty, patriotism, and personal interest demand of you as directly and emphatically as if you were buried in the heart of one. It is the lax, easy-going, lazy public sentiment characteristic of the American, ready to run any risk—a few miles away—rather than be disturbed, and just as ready to spend millions—if they come from a few miles away—on anything which makes for splurge, which gives our legislators the time and courage to devote to appropriations for graphic measures, and their inclination to howl economy when it comes to the ordinary necessities of decent housekeeping.

The persistent demand of every individual American would immediately secure the means and the laws for adequate forest protection. Destructive forest fires can positively be prevented, but you and I must do it, or Congress will not. The great forests of Europe are protected, and yield in return enormous revenues. If this government is so poor that it must economize, let it build one less battle-ship a year. If the money were spent in the preservation of our forests, instead, it would yield the nation one hundred per cent. interest, besides all the saving of human life, where it now only entails a total loss of the original expenditure, an accruing loss for maintenance, and contingent loss of life. If you think it over, you will join the ranks of those who would force their legislative representatives to stop squandering the public money and begin devoting it to practical purposes, *pro bono publico*.

WILLARD FRENCH

WALNUTS AND WINE



A CONSIDERATE WOMAN

"They may say what they please about Mabel Walloper," said old Mrs. Jimmerson, as she poured out her husband's tea the other night, while the rain fell in torrents outside. "She may be frivolous—indeed, I know she is frivolous—and one of the worst little flirts in town, and the way she treats poor Hiram Winkletop is all that anybody who chooses to criticise her for it may say about her. Then she is the bossiest woman from here to Skowhegan—there is n't a pie in this town that she is n't eternally trying to get her finger in; and I don't wonder the minister's wife hates her, the way she goes in to run everything from the Sunday School up to the Sewing Society; but all the same she is a considerate woman—mighty considerate. I don't know another woman who would do what she did to-day."

"What did she do to-day?" asked Jimmerson, who had his own opinions as to the lady's good points.

"Why, when this perfect deluge of a rain started in this afternoon she remembered that the last time she was here at our meeting of the Browning Club she had borrowed our umbrella," said Mrs. Jimmerson enthusiastically, "and, without hesitating a minute, she put on her hat and water-proof coat and came all the way over here in that raging storm to return it. I think that was mighty thoughtful and nice of her. Don't you?"

"I certainly do," said Jimmerson. "I should n't have thought it of her."

"I guess we've all done her an injustice," said Mrs. Jimmerson, "but hereafter I shall know better. I don't think I should have ventured out on a day like this on such an errand."

"Well, I'm mighty glad she did it," said Jimmerson. "Mighty glad. I've got to go back to the store for a little while this evening, and that bumber shoot will come in handy."

Walnuts and Wine

Mrs. Jimmerson's face flushed, and she coughed in an embarrassed way.

"Why, Tom, I'm sorry, but you can't have it, dear," she said.

"Why not?" demanded Jimmerson.

"Why," said Mrs. Jimmerson, "it was raining so hard that I had to lend it to Mabel again to go home with. I could n't do anything else after she had been so thoughtful as to bring it back."

John Kendrick Bangs

EVOLUTION

By Charles C. Jones

On well-flaked corn I chewed this morn—

I want no meat in mine!

At noon I'll get a wheat briquette—

That's fine!

At close of day, of well-chopped hay

My heavy meal shall be;

And I'll grow strong and dance along—

Whoopee!

My life seems new, my body, too,

Since food I've taken raw;

So now in praise my voice I raise—

Heehaw!

MORAL SUASION

The neighbors of a certain woman in a New England town maintain that this lady entertains some very peculiar notions touching the training of children. Local opinion ascribes these oddities on her part to the fact that she attended normal school for one year just before her marriage.

Said one neighbor: "She does a lot of funny things. What do you suppose I heard her say to that boy of hers this afternoon?"

"I dunno. What was it?"

"Well, you know her husband cut his finger badly yesterday with a hay-cutter; and this afternoon as I was goin' by the house I heard her say:

"Now, William, you must be a very good boy, for your father has injured his hand, and if you are naughty he won't be able to whip you."

Edwin Tarrisse

Walnuts and Wine

THE GIRL AND THE PROPHETS

"That South Sea Islander is considerably like the prophets of old."

"How is that?"

"She has n't much on her in her own country."

J. W. Babcock



NICE FOR THE BOYS

"Patty," said Grandma, "I think it about time you stopped playing with boys. Little girls ought not to care to play with boys, when they're as large as you."

"Oh, that's all right, Grandma. Why, the bigger we get, the better we like 'em!"

E. C. Lent



IF!

At Madison University the president for many years was Dr. Eaton, beloved by the entire student body, who went to him for advice in matters great and small. After one commencement the valedictorian anxiously asked him his opinion on his work, and Dr. Eaton, after a pause, said: "Edward, if you would pluck a few feathers from the wings of your imagination and stick them in the tail of your judgment, you would make better speeches."

L. H.



WHERE?

Down in Virginia, folks say we are somewhat apt to think the sun revolves round and round our little verdant spot of ground, so it is an actual fact that one day when the mountain on which one of our citizens resided caught fire, he ran to his cabin calling:

"Wife, wife, the *world's* on fire! Git yo' underclo'es, and le's go!"

J. T.



A CONUNDRUM

Into a general store of a town in Arkansas there recently came a darky complaining that a ham which he had purchased there was not good.

"The ham is all right, Zeph," insisted the storekeeper.

"No, it ain't, boss," insisted the negro. "Dat ham's shore bad."

"How can that be," continued the storekeeper, "when it was cured only a week?"

The darky scratched his head reflectively, and finally suggested:

"Den, mebbe it's had a relapse."

M. L. H.

Walnuts and Wine

THE VOICE OF THE PRESS

By W. J. Lampton

Gee,
Look at Me!
If I ain't free,
I'm mighty close to Liberty!
And, say,
There's no other way
For the Press to be,
See?
I am the Voice of the People!
A nation's fame
Or a nation's shame
It is my duty to proclaim.
If fame, to let the glory
Be known that all may know
And by it be encouraged
To loftier heights to grow.
If shame, to let its sinning
Be known that all may know
And make a common effort
Against a common foe.
That's Me,
See?
That's the Press,
No more, no less!
A menace to the evil,
A bugle-call to right,
A helping hand for weakness,
A fist for vicious might.
By cripes,
Me for the Stars and Stripes!
Me for the public welfare!
Me for the great and small!
But neither big nor little,
Except for the good of all!
I'm a straight proposition,
And if I were not,
The Power of the Press
Would be handed the swat,
Sure!

Walnuts and Wine

POULTRY FEATHERS

Ida Black had retired from the most select colored circles for a brief space, on account of a slight difficulty connected with a gentleman's poultry-yard. Her mother was being consoled by a white friend.

"Why, Aunt Easter, I was mighty sorry to hear about Ida—"

"Marse John, Ida ain't nuvver tuk dem chickens. Ida would n't do sich a thing! Ida would n't demeange herse'f to rob nobody's hen-roost—and, any way, dem old chickens warn't nothing 't all but feathers when we picked 'em."

J. T.



THE WIFE'S WORK

The man who makes his wife get up in the morning to start the fires at last saved enough money to buy an automobile. One day while going up a hill the machine stopped.

"You 'll have to get out and push, Fannie," he said, "because I've got to stay here and guide it."

William J. Burtscher



THE SINEWS OF WAR

On the occasion of the annual encampment of a Western militia, one of the soldiers, a clerk who lived well at home, was experiencing much difficulty in disposing of his rations.

A fellow-sufferer near by was watching with no little amusement the first soldier's attempts to Fletcherize a piece of meat. "Any trouble, Tom?" asked the second soldier sarcastically.

"None in particular," was the response. Then, after a sullen survey of the bit of beef he held in his hand, the amateur fighter observed:

"Bill, I now fully realize what people mean when they speak of the sinews of war."

Howard Morse



WHERE THE JURYMEN WENT

In the South of Ireland a judge heard his usher of the court say, "Gentlemen of the jury, take your proper places," and was convulsed with laughter at seeing seven of them walk into the dock.

L. H.



There is no objection to a man riding his hobby if he does not exceed the speed limit.

L. B. Coley



Motors alter circumstances,

Minna Thomas Antrim

Walnuts and Wine

NOT WHAT SHE EXPECTED

The Governor of a Western State was dining with the family of a Representative in Congress from that State, and opposite him at table sat the little girl of the family, aged ten. She gazed at the Governor solemnly throughout the repast.

Finally the youngster asked, "Are you really and truly a governor?"

"Yes," replied the great man laughingly; "I really and truly am."

"I've always wanted to see a governor," continued the child, "for I've heard Daddy speak of 'em."

"Well," rejoined the Governor, "now that you have seen one, are you satisfied?"

"No, sir," answered the youngster, without the slightest impertinence, but with an air of great conviction, "no, sir; I'm disappointed."

Elgin Burroughs

SCHOOL FADS

By J. J. O'Connell

This education with a frill—

It turns out quite contrary:

It makes a Molly out of Bill,

A tomboy out of Mary.



NOT ALL THERE, EITHER

While David Belasco was telling some reporters about his troubles with the "free-seats" problem, he related an experience of a friend of his out west. This manager was taking a company on tour. One night he met the town's influential citizen in a hotel, and before they parted the manager had invited the citizen to come to the show next night and "bring his family." About eight o'clock next evening the man put his head into the box-office window, and was recognized by the manager, who said, "How many have you with you, Mr. Blank?" reaching for a pen to write out the pass.

"Well, you see, some of my family were not able to come on account of sickness," said the citizen regretfully, "so I have been able to bring only fifty-eight."

"You will understand," continued Mr. Belasco, "that my friend had quite forgotten that he was in Salt Lake City. His new acquaintance, the influential citizen, was an old Mormon."

R. M. Winans

Walnuts and Wine

KNEW THE BOUNDARY LINE

The friends of a couple in Cleveland, in whose household no doubt exists as to who is the head of the family, tell an interesting story relative to the last trifling passage at arms between husband and wife.

One evening just before dinner the wife, who had been playing bridge all the afternoon, came in to find her husband and a strange man (afterward ascertained to be a lawyer) engaged in some mysterious business over the library table, upon which were spread several sheets of paper.

"What are you doing with all that paper, Henry?" demanded the wife.

"I am making a wish," meekly responded the husband.

"A wish?"

"Yes, my dear. In your presence I shall not presume to call it a will."

T.



WHERE HE CAME IN

The London consul of a continental kingdom was informed by his government that one of his countrywomen, supposed to be living in Great Britain, had been left a large fortune. After advertising without result, he applied to the police, and a smart young detective was set to work. A few weeks later his chief asked how he was getting on.

"I've found the lady, sir."

"Good! Where is she?"

"At my place. I married her yesterday."

M. L. H.



A SALLY FROM THE MOTORMAN

A Washington street-car was getting under way when two women, rushing from opposite sides of the street to greet each other, met right in the middle of the car-track and in front of the car. There the two stopped and began to talk. The car stopped, too, but the women did not appear to realize that it was there. Certain of the passengers, whose heads were immediately thrust out of the windows to ascertain what the trouble was, began to make sarcastic remarks, but the two women heeded them not.

Finally the motorman showed that he had a saving sense of humor. Leaning over the dash-board, he inquired, in the gentlest of tones:

"Pardon me, ladies, but shall I get you a couple of chairs?"

Fenimore Martin

Walnuts and Wine

ERASMUS POTTER

By C. H. Martin

Erasmus Potter ran his house
On hygienic lines.
He read the *Health Review* each week,
Besides the *Microbe Times*;
Till soon he knew the name of each
New germ that science found,
And also how to swat that germ
When it came sneaking round.

Erasmus Potter ate health-foods.
Both pies and cakes he'd spurn.
He boiled the water that he drank
To kill the typhoid germ.
"A man can live two hundred years,"
To friends he used to say,
"If he'll observe the rules of health,
And keep the germs at bay."

No microbe ever tackled him,
No germ e'er came his way;
But did he live two hundred years?
Ah, no—for one sad day,
While dodging germs, he failed to see
The auto, so 't is said.
A jar, a bump, a thud, a thump!
Erasmus Potter's dead!



COULD N'T SEE THE POINT

The difficulty to get the average Englishman to take a hint is illustrated in the story told of a gentleman who sent, by hand, a private note to a certain crusty old Earl on a personal matter. On the return of the servant, the gentleman questioned him as to his reception.

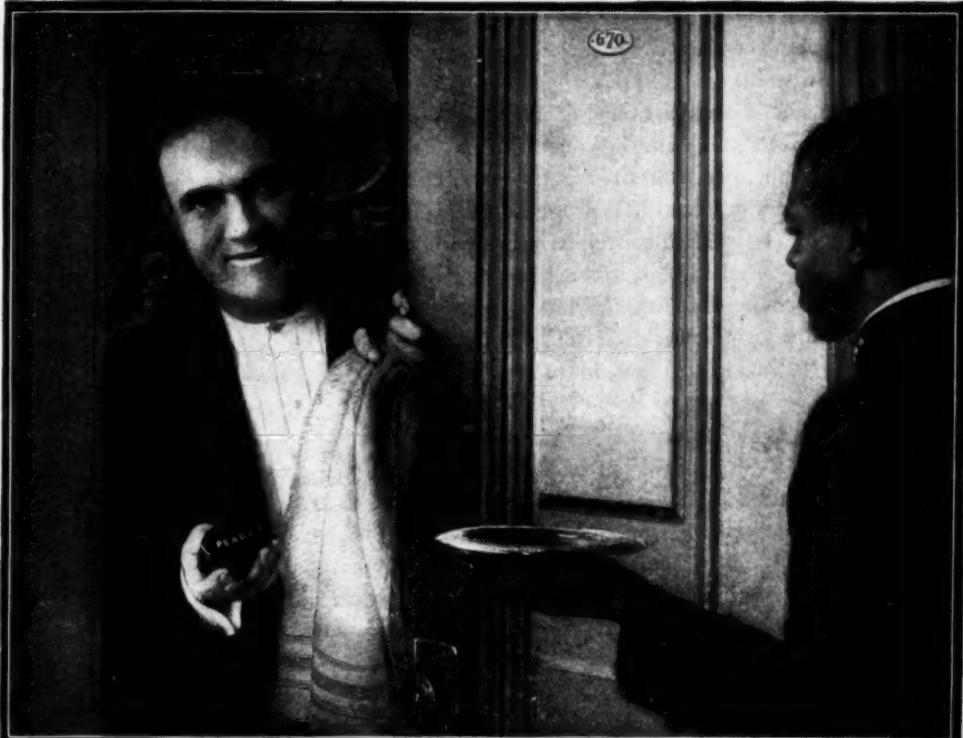
"H'i say, sir," he said, "there aren't no use writin' 'im h'any letters; 'e caw n't see to read 'em. 'E's blind."

"Blind! Since when?"

"H'i don't know, sir; but 'e's blind, sir. 'E awsked me twice where me 'at was, an' H'i 'ad h'it on me bloomin' 'ead all the time."

R. M. Winans

Walnuts and Wine



"Good Morning, Have You Used Pears' Soap?"

Few travel comforts can compare with that of a soothing, balmy, skin-preserving toilet soap—one that will keep the skin in perfect condition whatever winds assail—whether it be hot or cold, sunny or cloudy, wet or dry. Such is

Pears' Soap

which both protects and beautifies. The composition of this favorite beauty soap of six generations is of such an exquisite emollient character that it promotes the full natural action of the pores, and imparts to the skin-surface the refined pink and white of a perfect complexion.

Pears takes up little room, but it is good company—to have it ready for use anywhere and at any time is in the highest degree comforting. With Pears the skin is safe. Without it the traveler is at the mercy of whatever soap he can get; and as many soaps are injurious to the skin and ruinous to the complexion, it behoves everyone to be safeguarded with Pears. If any other soap is furnished you—send out and get Pears.

The Most Economical as Well as the Best

OF ALL SCENTED SOAPS PEARS' OTTO OF ROSE IS THE BEST.
"All rights secured."

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Walnuts and Wine

HOT ENOUGH

A Wyoming cowpuncher, upon one of his infrequent visits to town, went into a restaurant and ordered a steak. When it was served, he looked over the assortment of bottles in the centre of the table, and, selecting one which was new to him, poured the contents liberally over his meat. He cut off a generous bite, and the observers watched its progress to his mouth with some interest, for the bottle had contained tabasco sauce.

He tried in vain to swallow the morsel on his tongue while surprise changed to anguish in his face. Finally he jumped to his feet, and as he ejected the bite violently to the floor he yelled:

"Blaze! durn you, blaze!"

Caroline Lockhart

CAUSE FOR REGRET

A Boston physician tells of the case of a ten-year-old boy who, by reason of an attack of fever, became deaf. The physician could afford the lad but little relief, so the boy applied himself to the task of learning the deaf-and-dumb alphabet. The other members of his family, too, acquired a working knowledge of the alphabet, in order that they might converse with the unfortunate youngster.

During the course of the next few months, however, Tommy's hearing suddenly returned to him, assisted no doubt by a slight operation performed by the physician.

Every one was, of course, delighted, particularly the boy's mother, who one day exclaimed:

"Oh, Tommy, isn't it delightful to talk to and hear us again?"

"Yes," assented Tommy, but with a degree of hesitation; "but here we've all learned the sign language, and we can't find any more use for it!"

Howard Morse

THE FULLNESS OF HER LOVE

Pettibone: "One cannot live on love alone."

Funnibone: "I can live on my love."

Pettibone: "Why, how is that?"

Funnibone: "She has one hundred thousand dollars."

Edmund Moberly

THEY NEVER DO

Society is full of people who would be perfectly delightful if they could only remember what they meant to say.

Graham Charteris

Walnuts and Wine

Like
Narcissus

NABISCO

Sugar Wafers

Suggest the fragrance of Spring blossoms,
sweetness, goodness, and purity.

NABISCO is the dessert confection of
perfection—ideal with ices or beverages.

In ten cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

CHOCOLATE TOKENS—a sweet
dessert confection covered with
creamy, rich chocolate.

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A COOL SEND-OFF

A young couple appeared not long ago in a prayer-meeting in a Middle West town and requested the minister to marry them. The service was interrupted to oblige them, and after the ceremony they took a front seat while the regular meeting resumed. A hymn was then given out that had evidently not been selected with this incident in view. The opening line said:

Deluded souls that look for heaven.

P. R. H.



YOUTHFUL PANGS OF HUNGER

There's a youngster in Boston whose appetite is a constant source of amazement to his family and relatives.

On one occasion this lad was taken to spend the day with an uncle in the suburbs. At dinner he ate so much that finally it became actually necessary to forbid him to eat any more. Later, when the family were taking their ease on the porch, the irrepressible William pulled something from his pocket and began gnawing it.

"What have you there?" demanded his father.

"Only a dog-biscuit," came in apologetic tone from Willie.

"Where did you get it?"

"I knew I'd be hungry before I got home," explained the lad, "so I took it away from Fido."

Elgin Burroughs



THE TITHER

By N. Parker Jones

When at first the tipping habit turned the brain of foolish man
It aroused emotions pleasant but quite un-American,

As with well-defined elation,

From his more exalted station

Of his funds a tenth for service he dispensed and liked the plan.

But to-day, when he indulges in a fad for little trips,
Via motor, steam, or trolley, or across the sea in ships,

Just a tenth of all his treasure

He expends on food and pleasure,

And reserves the other ninety for his necessary tips.



GIVE a franchise grabber an "L," and he'll take a subway.

E. J.

Walnuts and Wine



In All Kinds of Weather

Kellogg's

TOasted CORN FLAKES

Fresh—Crisp—Delicious
A New Supply Always at Your Grocer's

INDIVIDUALLY GENUINE WITHOUT THIS SIGNATURE

H. K. Kellogg



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Walnuts and Wine

A LITTLE SPECTATOR AT A FIRE

Little Arlene was familiar with the appearance of the garden-hose at home, but when she observed a line of fire-hose, with its great length and bulk, lying in serpent-like distortion in the street, she immediately inquired what it was. Her mother replied that it was firemen's hose, and the child went on watching the fire.

In the mean time two additional fire companies dashed up, and these newly-arrived fire-fighters were carrying their respective lines toward the burning building, when little Arlene spied them.

"Oh, Mamma," she cried, craning her neck out of the crowd, "here come more firemen, dragging their hosiery behind them!"

C. C. Mullin



IMMUTABILITY

Cephas is a darky come up from Maryland to a border town in Pennsylvania, where he has established himself as a handy man to do odd jobs. He is a good worker, and sober, but there are certain proclivities of his which necessitate a pretty close watch on him. Not long ago he was caught with a chicken under his coat, and was haled to court to explain its presence there.

"Now, Cephas," said the judge very kindly, "you have got into a new place, and you ought to have new habits. We have been good to you and helped you, and while we like you as a sober and industrious worker, this other business cannot be tolerated. Why did you take Mrs. Gilkie's chicken?"

Cephas was stumped, and he stood before the majesty of the law, rubbing his head and looking ashamed of himself. Finally he answered:

"'Deed, I dunno, Jedge," he explained, "'ceptin' 't is dat chickens is chickens and niggers is niggers."

W. J. L.



THE ONE DESTINATION

"Is there any field for new poets?"

"Yes, Potter's Field."

Winifred Winn



A CASTLE IN THE AIR

A structure which usually consoles the architect for a hovel on earth.

Dulcimer Dawson



Many a ribald song has been played on an upright piano.

Flinders Snape

Walnuts and Wine



A MEDIAEVAL CONDITION

Telephone Service— Universal or Limited?

TELEPHONE users make more local than long distance calls yet to each user comes the vital demand for distant communication.

No individual can escape this necessity. It comes to all and cannot be foreseen.

No community can afford to surround itself with a sound-proof Chinese Wall and risk telephone isolation.

No American State would be willing to make its boundary line

an impenetrable barrier, to prevent telephone communication with the world outside.

Each telephone subscriber, each community, each State demands to be the center of a talking circle which shall be large enough to include all possible needs of inter-communication.

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**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

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Walnuts and Wine

MARVELOUS

By S. S. Stinson

She plays with me
At archery—
I'm six feet tall, you know;
And so, you see,
This maiden wee
Can draw a six-foot beau!

SEEKING THE DIRECTORY'S AID

A nicely dressed and altogether prepossessing young woman was turning over the leaves of a directory in a Baltimore drug-store, when a testy old gentleman entered. He too wished to consult the directory, to learn the address of a man with whom he had some business at that time. He stood about, now and then casting heavy looks in the direction of the directory, and coughing suggestively.

Still the woman placidly turned over leaf after leaf, without any apparent intention to decide whether the name she was seeking was Brown, Smith, or Jones.

Finally, when matters were beginning to grow pretty tense, the old gentleman offered to assist the young woman, suggesting that his experience might tend to save time and lessen her labor. With a sweet smile full of appreciation, she replied:

"Oh, thanks! You are most kind! I am trying to find a real pretty name for my baby."

E. T.

THE coming life-preserved for ocean liners will of course be a small air-ship that can be closed like a telescope and hung up over the bed.

William J. Burtscher

TIT FOR TAT

"He seems to know all the best people in town, and yet I've never seen him with them."

"No, they know him."

Marie Lillerton

RICH MAN, POOR MAN

You can easily tell a poor man from a rich one by examining his mail. The poor man's mail consists of requests for money that he owes; the rich man's for money that he does n't owe.

Ellis O. Jones

Walnuts and Wine

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GOLDEN WORDS FITLY SPOKEN

is an inspiring, fascinating volume just issued

A man is measured by his companions, and the editor, H. Wellington Wood, widely known as the author of "Winning Men One by One," has skilfully culled some four hundred of the choicest quotations from more than one hundred eminent authors, association with whom he has found most helpful in twenty-four years of intimate acquaintance with their writings. This unique collection is most attractively presented in specially selected bold-face type, easily read, the letter-press in two colors, profusely illustrated, and richly bound in decorative cloth covers at \$1.50 net, and in limp ooze, neatly boxed, at \$2.50 net. *A Beautiful Gift Book.* Sold by all booksellers.

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GUILTY OF SOMETHING

In certain sections of West Virginia there is no liking for automobileists, as was evidenced in the case of a Washingtonian who was motoring in a sparsely settled region of the State.

This gentleman was haled before a local magistrate upon the complaint of a constable. The magistrate, a good-natured man, was not, however, absolutely certain that the Washingtonian's car had been driven too fast; and the owner stoutly insisted that he had been progressing at the rate of only six miles an hour.

"Why, your Honor," he said, "my engine was out of order, and I was going very slowly because I was afraid it would break down completely. I give you my word, sir, you could have walked as fast as I was running."

"Well," said the magistrate, after due reflection, "you don't appear to have been exceeding the speed limit, but at the same time you must have been guilty of something, or you would n't be here. I fine you ten dollars for loitering."

Fenimore Martin

HER BASHFUL BEAU

An intensely bashful young man was driving one evening with a young lady whom he had been calling on for some time previous. The stillness of the evening and the beauty of the scene around him inspired his courage, and, sitting stiffly erect and with his face forward, he asked suddenly, "May I kiss you?"

"Surely," she coyly replied.

"Aw," he said, his face scarlet, and larruping his horses to a run—"aw, I was only foolin'."

Augusta C. Lynch

AGAIN THE BANANA

By La Touche Hancock

The lawyer fell, and he tore his clothes,
And the mishap made him feel
That, as the phraseology goes,
He'd lost a suit on appeal!

JOE WAS RIGHT

"Pa," said little Joe, "I bet I can do something you can't."

"Well, what is it?" demanded his pa.

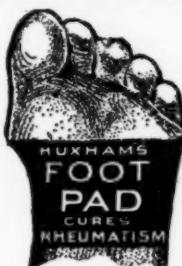
"Grow," replied the youngster triumphantly.

H. E. Zimmerman

Walnuts and Wine

Are Good Feet
worth 50 cents?

HUXHAM'S



Absorbent
PADS

support weak arches,
cure by Absorption

ACHING
FEET
AND LIMBS

from any cause,

Callouses, Sciatica, or Rheumatic Pains. No metal, stiff leather, or straps. Nothing to take or rub on. They support the arch, strengthen the muscles, are soft, comfortable to wear and give immediate relief or money refunded. **50c**
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LIGHT WORK

A weather-beaten damsels somewhat over six feet in height and with a pair of shoulders proportionately broad, appeared at a back door in Wyoming and asked for light housework. She said that her name was Lizzie, and explained that she had been ill with typhoid and was convalescing.

"Where did you come from, Lizzie?" inquired the woman of the house. "Where have you been?"

"I've been workin' out on Howell's ranch," replied Lizzie, "diggin' post-holes while I was gittin' my strength back."

Caroline Lockhart



NOT ROT, NOR SYMPATHY

Teacher: "Willie, did your father cane you for what you did in school yesterday?"

Pupil: "No, ma'am; he said the licking would hurt him more than it would me."

Teacher: "What rot! Your father is too sympathetic."

Pupil: "No, ma'am; but he's got the rheumatism in both arms."

C. C. Mullin



OBEDIENT

By S. S. Stinson

"Hail, gentle Spring!" the poets sing,
Nor do they sing in vain;
Spring hails and snows and rains and blows
With all her might and main.



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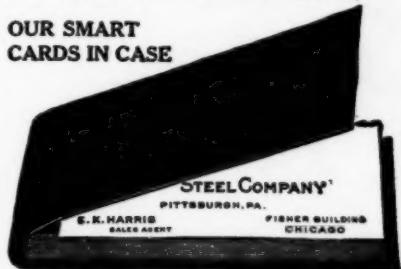
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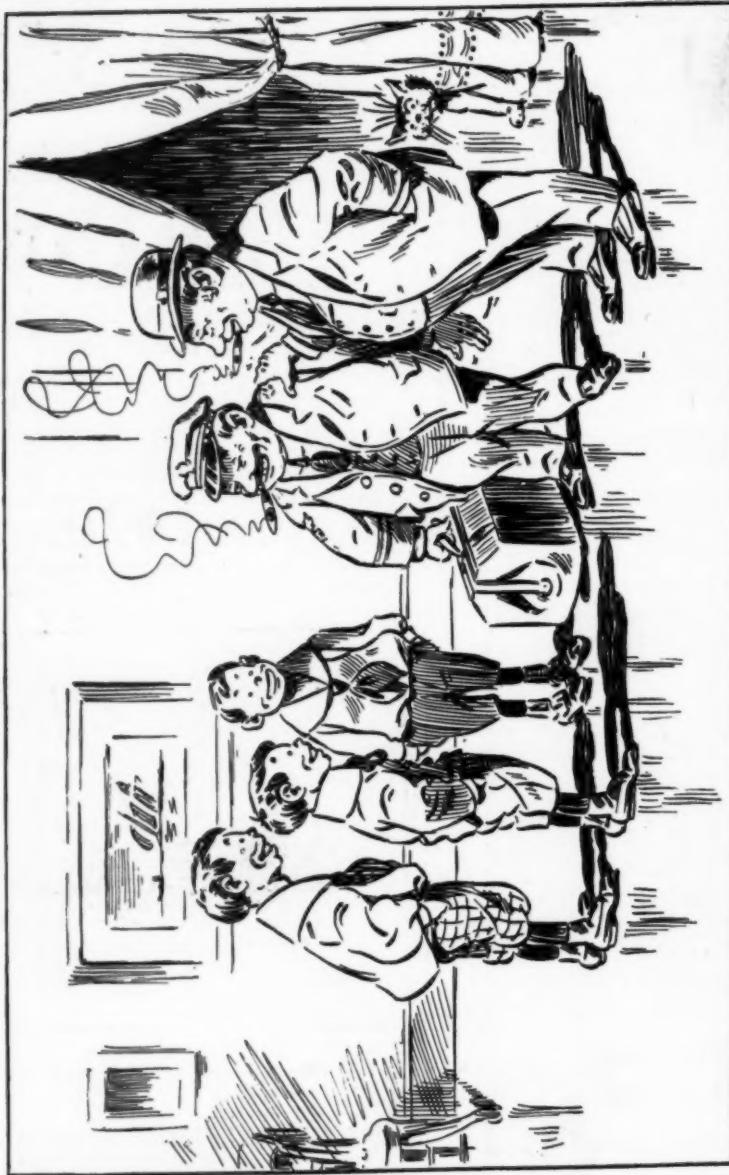
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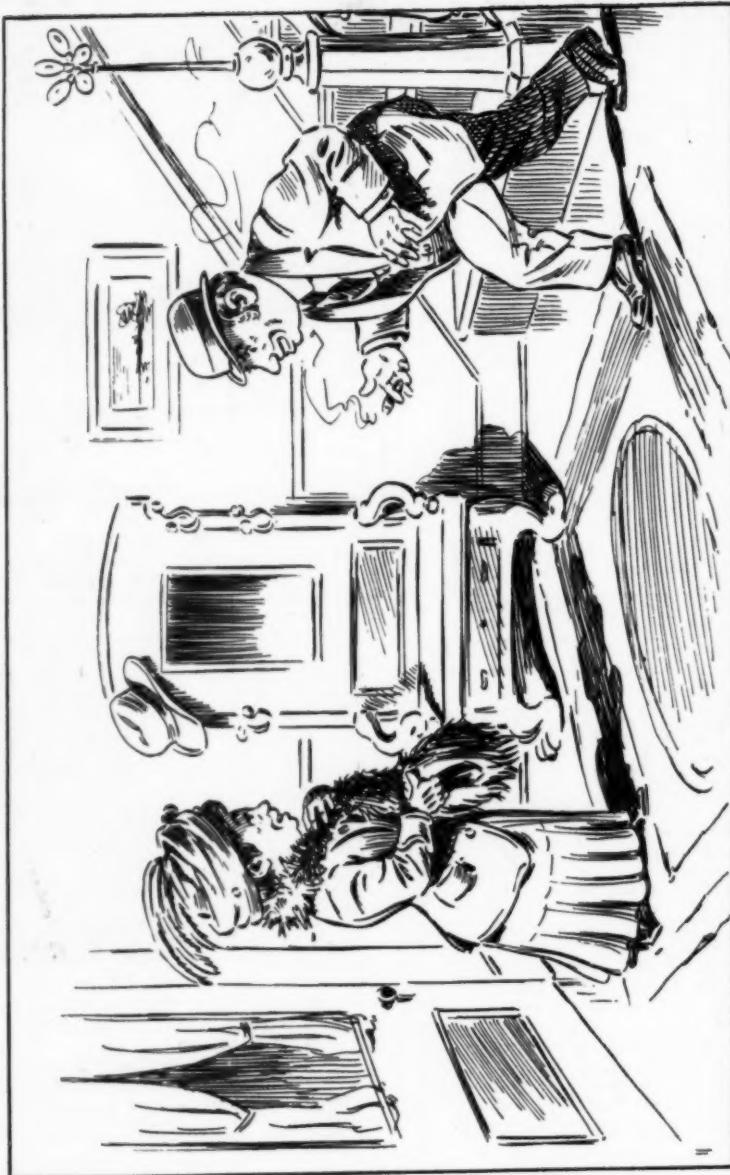
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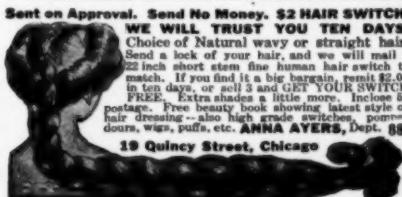
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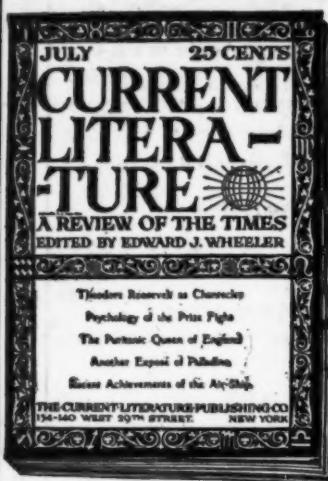
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